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Bob Dole's Powell Problem

Would Colin Powell be the ideal vice presidential running mate for Bob Dole? Practically everyone associated with the Dole for President campaign thinks so. Except Dole.

The Weekly Standard has learned that Dole has two big qualms. One is that asking Powell to join the ticket would be seen as an admission that Dole can't beat Bill Clinton on his own.

Thus, choosing Powell would make Dole look even weaker than he already does. Dole's other qualm is that Powell might not strengthen the ticket. A pro-life Rust Belt governor—John Engler of Michigan or George Voinovich of Ohio—might add more.

Of course, Dole first has to win the GOP presidential nomination, and following his somewhat disappointing showing in the Florida straw poll, the knives are out for campaign manager Scott Reed.

In fact, George Bush's hand-picked RNC chairman, Rich Bond, was trolling the halls of the Republican Governors Association meeting in New Hampshire last week, intimating he would soon be playing a larger role in the Dole campaign.

Back in Washington, Dole's Senate staffers were dropping dark hints about Reed's alleged mistakes. Truth to tell, Reed—a longtime aide to Jack Kemp and a top-notch political organizer—is running as good a campaign as his candidate permits.

But does Dole realize this?

Travelgate Is Back (cont'd)

The acquittal of former White House travel office chief Billy Dale makes it clearer than ever that the administration's pursuit of the career civil servant was a politically motivated prosecution—a prosecution undertaken because of false and defamatory allegations hurled around both by Clinton cousin (and White House staffer) Catherine Cornelius and by presidential crony Harry Thomason.

On May 13, 1989, Cornelius told the FBI she'd learned from a business associate of Thomason's that Dale routinely demanded kickbacks from companies wanting a piece of the lucrative White House press air-charter business. Dale and his subordinates were fired six days later primarily because of these allegations—even though a study of the travel office by the accounting firm of Peat Marwick found no evidence whatever of kickbacks.

Cornelius's supposed source was one Ross Fisher, president of a company called Miami Air. But when Fisher was interviewed by White House investigators a month later, he flatly denied Cornelius's story. In truth, the source was Thomason himself: Official papers reveal that another White House official explicitly named Thomason as the one spreading the kickback story. (Thomason wanted some travel office business for himself.)

A Justice Department official has told congressional investigators that the kickback angle was the impetus for the FBI's investigation into Dale—an investigation leading to an indictment on embezzlement charges laughed out of court by a jury in just over two hours. The bureau aggressively pursued Dale because it was desperate to refute allegations that it had been improperly used in the Travelgate mess.

"Harry fed a phony story to the White House, and when they found out there was nothing to it, they sat on their hands while the FBI went on a wild goose chase," says one official. Little wonder, then, that the House committee probing Travelgate has decided to subpoena Thomason's personal papers relating to the whole business. And is making ready to subpoena Thomason himself when Travelgate hearings resume early next year.

Wings? What Wings?

The American media herd just gets more and more cattle-like. This week's exhibit: The constant repetition of the same joke about Beatles lead singer Paul McCartney in the wake of the release of some new Beatles material. The Associated Press offered this mock Q&A on November 17: "Name the band Paul McCartney was in before Wings." The *Washington Post* followed two days later: "Such a concerted [publicity] effort is aimed . . . also at Gen-Xers and other new kids on the block who may not know that Paul McCartney was in a group before Wings."

Indeed, ye olde chestnut has been around a long time, variously ascribed to conversations overheard in university bookstores and Comedy Store shtick ("My daughter told me something that blew my mind," quipped comedian Billy Crystal in 1985. "She said, 'Daddy, did you know Paul McCartney was in another group before Wings?'") But most often it is embraced as spontaneous waggery by pedestrian journalists—a Nexis search found

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Scrapbook

more than 80 repetitions of the joke. The joke presumes that readers of everything from the *Anchorage Daily News* to *AutoWeek* have managed to escape the last 25 years of daily retro-Beatles barrages and are instead haunted by the indelible strains of famed Wings tunes, such as "Silly Love Songs," "Somebody's Knockin' at the Door," and "Morse Moose and the Gray Goose."

The Reading List

The Bosnian peace deal put us in mind of novels that deal with great powers intervening in smaller countries:

Anna Karenina, by Leo Tolstoy. Often forgotten in the swirl of marital disappointments, passions, and adulteries is this novel's concern with the question of ethnicity: Most Russians favored their nation's 1875 intervention in the struggle inside the Ottoman empire between persecuted Slavs (thought to be of Russian origin) and the ruling Turks. Tolstoy, through his character Levin, offers a startlingly contemporary attack on the Slavic incursion.

Black Mischief, by Evelyn Waugh. A novel about the downside of imperialism: If you're not careful, you might get eaten by an African lord named Seth, even if he was educated at Oxford.

The Charterhouse of Parma, by Stendhal. How Napoleon's invasion of Italy leads the young hothead Fabrizio to plot the French potentate's assassination.

Alternative Reading List

Taken with the *New York Times*'s misattribution of the authorship of Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* to the late Kingsley Amis (author of *Lucky Jim*), reader Lorna Williams came up with a whole cluster of alternative classics:

The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, by Evelyn Waugh;

Vanity Fair, by Tom Wolfe;

The Wings of the Dove, by Larry McMurtry.

Contributions to the Sleepy Obit Writer's Canon should be sent to: Scrapbook, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Oooh, Is He Cute!

The Weekly Standard has learned that Mike Murphy, Lamar Alexander's presidential campaign guru and a master of the art of the political commercial, has been chosen by *Cosmopolitan* magazine as one of Washington's 10 most eligible bachelors.

Interviews are being conducted this week to rank the finalists. How high will the 33-year-old Murphy rise? We predict a third-place finish for Murphy, despite his hopes that he might finish a "strong second" thanks to his heavy courtship of the *Cosmo* delegates. Would such a showing disappoint Murphy? Hard to tell, because he is sure to apply his patented political "spin," issuing forth confident statements that he is "just where I want to be right now, a top-tier bachelor."

A majority of GOP bachelor-watchers, however, believe that Murphy needs to "make a move" soon if he hopes to find himself on the top of the testosterone heap. Says one pundit (and former girlfriend), who spoke on condition of anonymity, "Mike's ability to attract dates could be severely hampered by a third-place finish and refusal to spend money. He needs at least a second-place showing to get the momentum he needs going into the holidays."

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Elitism and Campaign Reform

Your editorial resignation toward our electoral system reveals a disturbing elitism behind your populism ("Campaign Reform: Leave Bad Enough Alone," Nov. 6). Political decision-making shifted via campaign finance to quarterly-report-driven oligopolists is inconsistent with a constitutionally based vision of our republic. Take-no-prisoners capitalism may be great in proper measure, but it does a crummy job of picking political leaders.

Limiting campaign influence to those who can actually vote for a candidate is a solution that is both powerful and intuitive. It could be implemented today without federal laws if citizens simply refused to vote for candidates who accepted (willingly or otherwise) money or other assistance from interests outside of their districts.

Conservatives who believe in the potential of the people to vote smartly betray their beliefs by throwing in the towel on money in politics.

JOSEPH P. CINCOTTA
BROOKFIELD, WI

Rehabilitating Communism

The hope of John Haynes and Harvey Klehr ("Messages from Moscow: What the Secret Cables Say," Nov. 13) that the anti-anti-Communists and the socialist intellectuals are going to admit their scholarly sins is, of course, ironic.

Haynes and Klehr know that the academic apologists for the American Communist Party are still around, arguing that the members were just idealists who wanted to build a better, and socialist, world. In fact, these hard-line socialists are peddling a "new" line, neatly summed up by Theodore Draper in a recent *New York Review of Books* essay titled, "Communist History as Soap Opera."

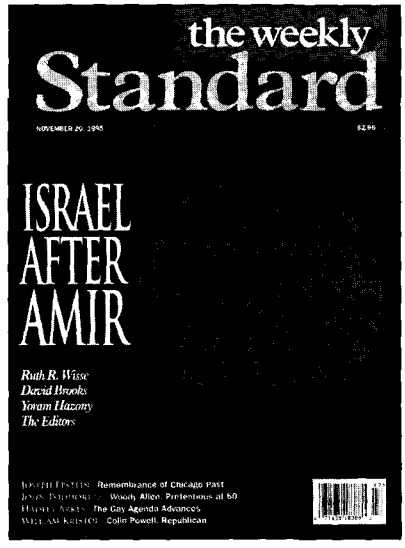
There is, Draper wrote, "clearly an attempt to rehabilitate communism by making it part of the larger family of socialism and democracy. No one would think of doing this favor for fascism, but communism with even more millions of victims and a much longer life span is the beneficiary of this sustained effort of historical rehabilitation in—of all places—American colleges and universities."

ARNOLD BEICHMAN
PALO ALTO, CA

Israel After Rabin

Your cover ("Israel After Amir," Nov. 20) is a disgrace. It is incomprehensible that any responsible publication would choose to glorify a cowardly, two-bit thug whose act of slaughtering in cold blood one of our most courageous heroes will forever change the course of history and the rest of the world.

Surely you are aware that the notoriety you are providing the killer is exactly what he sought. By not titling the article "Israel After Rabin," you attempt to minimize Rabin's accomplishments and diminish his stature.



The name of the assassin should not be mentioned in the same breath with that of Yitzhak Rabin, a man of character and accomplishment, attributes that the extremist traitor who wickedly and wantonly snuffed out his life will never know.

OREN M. SPIEGLER
PITTSBURGH, PA

Killing Broadway Slowly

John Podhoretz's article "The Brilliant Show That Killed Broadway" (Oct. 30) is one of the most provocative pieces I have ever read on that topic. However, *Company* is more of a symptom than a cause of Broadway's decline.

A single play does not have the power to kill an entire art form. Broadway died the death of a thousand cuts. Perhaps the most brutal though least obvious were: strong unions that limited competition; an enticing welfare state that destroyed initiative; a corrupt criminal justice system that made the world unsafe for young talent; a non-market health-care system that tolerated AIDS epidemics; and a public school monopoly that killed the artistic if not the technical spirit.

Irving Berlin left home at the age of eight, in hopes of easing a widow's burdens. His first job was as the seeing-eye boy for a street singer, Blind Sol. Before the age of nine, Berlin taught himself the piano. Bar owners let him practice whenever business was slow.

If Irving Berlin had been a child today, he would have faced at least three enemies: cutthroat gangs, dumb and dumber school officials, and bumbling bureaucrat-salesmen from the welfare state.

JOY ANTHONY
NEWPORT BEACH, CA

Tyranny of the Majority

In response to Richard Parker's avowedly populist attack on those who oppose a flag-desecration amendment ("Old Glories in Tandem: Flag and Constitution," Nov. 13), it is doubtless true that the flag symbolizes, among other things, our "aspirational bonds as a people." But to reduce that idea to one of a nation defined by "popular sovereignty based on political equality," and then to strip that equality of all content save the single right to vote, as Parker does in principle, is to gravely misstate the substance of our aspirations.

We are not, after all, an unbridled majoritarian democracy. All but ignoring the problem of majoritarian tyranny—which he reduces to repeated sneers about "governing elites"—Parker elevates "popular sovereignty" to *the* bedrock principle of our political order. If the Supreme Court stands athwart "our" effort to protect the flag, let's just exercise "our" constitutional

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sovereignty and explicitly protect it.

But why stop with the flag? Why not clean up a few other inconveniences while we're at it? The reason, it seems, is that the flag is unique, "a unique symbol of the bonds that *make wide-open debate possible.*"

That's it! Search the essay as you will, that's the closest you will get to an argument. Skeptics will note the circularity—and will note too that if the bonds endure only as long as their symbol endures, by force of law, they cannot be very strong.

ROGER PILON
WASHINGTON, DC

KEEP THE TROOPS AT HOME

Regarding Robert Kagan's article "America, Bosnia, Europe: A Compelling Interest" (Nov. 6) it would appear to me that our troops have no more business in Bosnia than we had in Somalia. The United Nations is certainly a poor means of keeping the peace anywhere. May the Lord forbid that we send in troops to peoples in other lands and put them under the umbrella of the U.N. for some foreign general to command.

I am a veteran of the Korean War and a flag-waving conservative, but I join with those who protest the folly of the political wars where literally thousands of American boys shed their blood. I recognize that there are righteous wars in our sinful world, but it is not always clear who is right. In all likelihood, our troops, were they to engage in the Bosnian conflict, would soon be greeted with "Yankee Go Home" rhetoric.

BOB STEWARD
HARRISON, MI

COLOR BLINDNESS BACKFIRES

My contempt for Columbia and other OPUs (overpriced, private universities) notwithstanding, when George Jochnowitz claims that the open admissions policy of the City University of New York (CUNY) is color blind ("More Tests, Nicer Campus," Nov. 13), I have to wonder whether elves drugged him 30 years ago, and he just woke up.

Open admissions was devised in the 1960s as a color-coded plan to admit less qualified blacks and Puerto Ricans to City College. Eventually it was extended to CUNY's other four-year schools. Well-to-do radicals who sent their children to private schools declared that City College's success in building itself up into the finest undergraduate institution in America, and perhaps the world, was racist, because there were too many white faces on hand.

The radicals, many of them Jews, were particularly distressed that so many gifted, working-class Jews were climbing the social ladder through City College. And so, in a conscious plan to reduce the percentage of white (Jewish) students, and score points with poverty pimps, they gutted it.

Fearing race riots, CUNY's board of trustees accelerated the plan's implementation from 1975 to 1970, after small groups of black and Puerto Rican students took over some City College buildings in 1968.

As time went on, a CUNY degree became worthless, and the city's school system was destroyed by illiterate black and Hispanic school teachers with CUNY degrees.

As a result of such social progress, CUNY (specifically, LaGuardia Community College and City College) has already had its share of Sharod Baker-type incidents, years ahead of Columbia.

ROBERT BERMAN
FAR ROCKAWAY, NY

ECONOMICS AND THE GAY AGENDA

Hadley Arkes provides a welcome summary of the implication of *Romer* v. *Evans* ("The Gay Agenda Advances," Nov. 20) but sidesteps the question of the legal prohibition of economic discrimination against gays in employment and housing.

This form of discrimination has been the main target of gay and straight liberal activism since Stonewall, and has been implemented by the addition of "sexual orientation" in the non-discrimination statutes of nine states and over a hundred municipalities. This is no more unnecessary or complex than the inclusion of religion or gender in such statutes.

But as Arkes points out, such activism should not serve as a springboard to the transformation of American social and sexual mores. The achievement of economic non-discrimination would do well to mark the end of "gay politics."

ROBERT LYON
PHILADELPHIA, PA

WASPS AS THE OTHER

I was stunned to read the demeaning word WASP ("Mighty Pretentious," Nov. 20) in an otherwise unexceptional article by John Podhoretz about Woody Allen.

The use of WASP is always evidence that the user harbors the sentiment that Christianity is a gutter religion. WASP is evidence that the user has strong, biased, negative feelings about the Other; in this case, Protestant English-Americans. Anti-Christian bigotry comes in many packages, but the most recognizable package of all is WASP, a term coined explicitly to disparage Christian Americans.

BO SEARS
SAN JOSE, CA

JOHN PODHORETZ RESPONDS: Oh, please.

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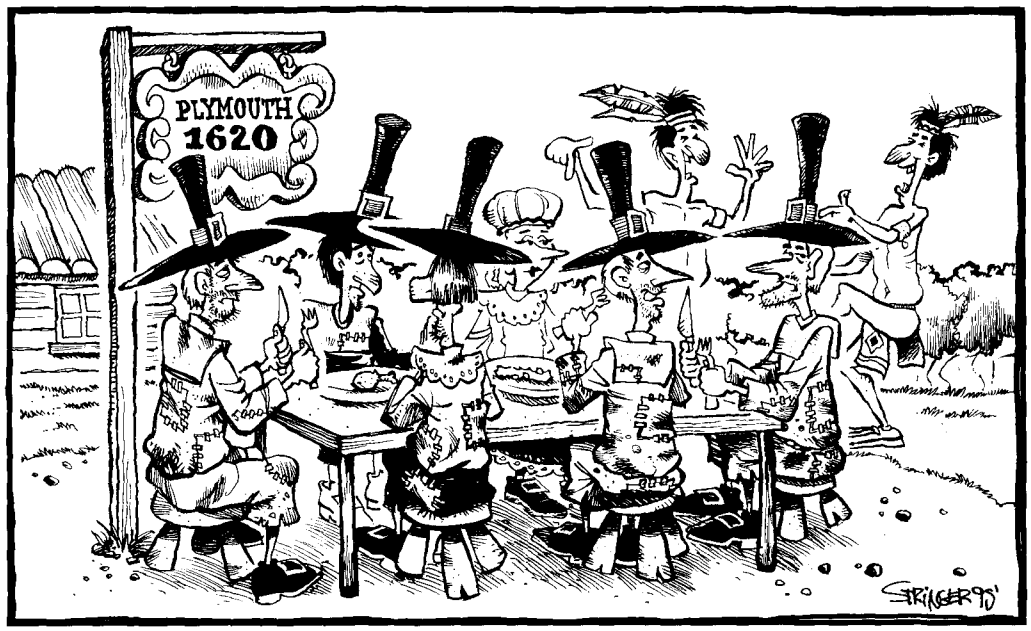

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When the Pilgrims landed in 1620, a communal society was mandated by the terms of their contract with London Adventurers. After starving for three years, the Pilgrims abandoned communism, legalizing private property and personal economic freedom. The first real Thanksgiving followed.

Since the birth of the U.S., the government has pursued its slow and silent encroachment upon these personal freedoms. The rising frustration among our citizens is directly linked to the rise in tax burden and the decline in our standard of living because government itself represents nearly 25 percent of our economy.

Guilty until proven innocent.

Direct taxes require you, and many others, to report your income. You are subjected to audits where the tax code assumes your guilt and the burden of proof lies with the taxpayer. The Constitution guarantees a criminal is innocent until proven guilty. But when revenue is at stake, government negates the basic freedoms our Founding Fathers fought to preserve. While the Constitution prohibited direct taxation and debtor's prison, the current tax code nullifies not merely the Founders' dreams, but circumvents their very safeguards against a greedy, spendthrift political structure.

At best, the Pilgrims' communal failure intended *equal* distribution of wealth. But the 16th Amendment, *not merely reversed* the Constitution's safeguards against government's natural desire to grab greater levels of revenue, it also opened the door to the redistribution of wealth philosophies made popular by Karl Marx.

When you sit down this Thanksgiving Day, reflect upon how far we have transgressed from the original design of the Constitution. Think about all the red tape, the deficit, the huge national debt, and the social decay. Ask yourself, "Have we honestly improved upon the dreams that brought so many to this land in search of personal freedom?"

Real reform or the flat tax?

In the coming months, a decision will have to be reached. Do we continue our current course with false reform, like the flat tax, reducing all deductions while retaining the guilty-until-proven-innocent approach? Or do we seek to restore the economic freedoms as first envisioned through the experience of our Founding Fathers? This choice between direct, intrusive income taxes and the personal freedom of an indirect system of retail sales tax will determine the destiny of our nation. The 21st Century will either evolve as George Orwell's vision or will be the rebirth of a new age of enlightenment.

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Bosnia: Support the President

Bosnian peace diplomacy, brokered by the United States, has passed a significant checkpoint in Dayton, Ohio. Now what? Administration advocates of the new accord oversell its merits. Secretary of State Christopher proclaims the agreement "a victory for all those who believe in a multiethnic democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina." Another U.S. official calls it a "fantastic deal" for the Bosnian Muslims.

That's saying too much. U.S. policy has never been devoted to reversing all Serbian military encroachments on Bosnian government-held territory. The pact signed in Dayton ratifies most of those Serbian land-grabs—and, in effect, the demonically ethnicized regional politics that impelled them. The country is to be divided along ethnic lines. Its new central government begins life enfeebled. The agreement's free-movement and resettlement promises appear fanciful.

But what the peace plan *can* possibly accomplish—a pacification of Balkan brutality sufficiently complete and lengthy to take root—is good enough. And better than much of the surprisingly strident, even cavalier, Republican opposition to the plan allows.

Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich expect the White House to request a non-binding resolution of congressional endorsement for the U.S. peacekeeping deployment required by the Dayton accord. Both men have their legitimate questions about that operation's details and contingencies, and about Balkan diplomacy's ultimate prospects. But they are holding open their options, and seem seriously concerned to maintain, as best they can, a bipartisan and muscular American foreign policy under presidential leadership.

Not so some of their vocal Republican colleagues. Phil Gramm, revealing previously undetected powers of international prognostication, somehow just *knows* that an American troop presence in Bosnia can only bring total disaster. He has "no confidence" in the president, whom he bitterly mocks with quotes reprinted in every American newspaper. Aside from Dick Lugar, measured and diplomatic as always, the rest of the GOP's presidential contenders are quick to agree. All firmly oppose Bosnian troop deployment. The Republican House of Representatives has already twice voted to defund the troops if it is not first granted the power to block them outright.

If cooler heads are to prevail, they had better open their mouths fast. It is obviously true, as Alan Keyes pointed out in the Florida presidential campaign debate a couple of weeks back, that for Bosnia and the rest of the world "there is a God" and U.S. military forces "are not Him." It is also true that there is a serious case against the troop deployment. Charles Krauthammer makes that case elsewhere in these pages.

But he does so while candidly conceding the damage such a last-minute withdrawal would do—first to American international credibility generally, and also to the NATO-led European security arrangements in which our national interest is inextricably intertwined. We may not be God, but where global security arrangements are concerned, we are the closest thing there is. And the United States would be a niggardly superpower indeed were we to withhold our mastery and muscle when they are asked for and widely expected to help halt horrifying bloodshed in Europe.

We are in Bosnia already. A high-profile regional peace accord, husbanded by American diplomacy, concluded on American soil, and announced in the Rose Garden of the White House, calls for us to go in deeper. To prevent it, at this point, Republicans would be

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forced to provoke a presidential foreign policy humiliation the likes of which probably have not been seen since the failure of Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations. And they would inescapably signal, in the process, that America is badly confused about its global status. And that an American president can no longer reliably serve as representative of his nation before the world.

Such a drastic diminution of presidential authority is dangerous. The Bosnia operation is a judgment call. The strongest case made by Bosnia doves still can't make it anything more than a judgment call. And in foreign policy judgment calls, prudence dictates a prejudice for presidential prerogative. Mr. Clinton cannot make *that* argument all by himself. He can and should, as George Bush did before him during the Kuwait crisis, make a strong appeal to the American people that U.S. national interests are at stake—and that he has a reasonable strategy to fulfill them.

Congress, for its part, should hold its hearings and delineate whatever conditions on deployment it believes appropriate. But while they're at it, Republicans should remember why it is they have spent the past 15 years defending presidential leadership in foreign affairs. At the end of the day, the Republican Congress should support the president on Bosnia. ♦

the weekly Standard

BUDGET TRIUMPH

You can summarize the budget deal now emerging between the White House and Congress in four words: George Herbert Walker Clinton. "It is clear to me," read President Bush's infamous June 26, 1990, press release, "that both the size of the federal deficit problem and the need for a package that can be enacted require all of the following," including—mumble, mumble, mumble—"tax revenue increases." At that point, the White House was still pursuing John Sununu's strategically brilliant negotiations with congressional Democrats. The Bush "tax revenue" statement was merely a technical detail in a presidency otherwise consistent with its conservative campaign promises. "I don't think that it is that big a change," Bush spokesman Marlin Fitzwater gamely argued. "We're still a long way from the final details of a settlement."

Sound familiar?

President Clinton has just broken his No Newt Budget pledge. He has obliged himself, in writing, to cooperate with Hill Republicans in the enactment of a strictly calculated seven-year path to fiscal balance. That budget will, in the language of last week's agreement, "ensure Medicare solvency" and "reform welfare" (read: unprecedented retrenchment in traditionally Democratic entitlements). It will also "help working families" and "stimulate future economic growth" (read: middle-class and capital-gains tax cuts). Liberalism, which holds that the federal government occupies an indissolubly central role in American life, is not supposed to look like this. The party—of Roosevelt and Johnson and Foley and Mitchell—is almost over.

Clinton's aides, Sununu's ghost hovering over their shoulders, deny all this. They claim, quite the contrary, to have snookered their Republican budget counterparts with a clause in last week's compact that promises "adequate funding" for Medicaid and a few other social programs. But if that were true, if the president had "won," then Republican backbenchers and conservative activists, always on guard against any conceivable reversal of principle, would be aboil with rage. And they're not. Among leading conservatives, only Phil Gramm is prepared, for the slight anti-Dole advantage it might earn him in coming presidential primaries, to accept the White House interpretation of last week's events. He complains that the accounting compromises foreshadowed in the deal—the Congressional Budget Office is to update (and thereby relax) its deficit projections—will permit billions in additional domestic spending.

In the narrowest sense, Gramm is right. If and when Congress edges part-way toward the president's more optimistic economic assumptions (as it probably will), more money *will* slop into agriculture, education, and environmental programs, for example. Until that happens, the White House will holler that "American values" are gravely threatened. And when it does, the White House will claim a stunning victory for Mr. Clinton's "principles."

But there *aren't* any serious principles still at issue in the budget fight between Clinton and Congress; last week put that question to rest. The president's coming "victory" will involve, at the outside limit, maybe $25 billion in annual spending above preferred Republican

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levels—in a $1.6 *trillion* budget. For those 40 pieces of silver, a 60-year federal welfare entitlement will end. Medicare will be restrained and partially "marketized." And inflation-adjusted spending on non-defense discretionary programs will actually fall. That's what a seven-year balanced budget *means*.

And it cannot be squared with programmatic liberalism—no matter how ostentatiously the president grunts and sweats for the table-scrap concessions he already knows he'll win. If Bill Clinton is right that this pending budget might fit his party's principles, then the Democratic party hasn't any principles. And if he ultimately decides to reject that budget, he will be doing so purely for purposes of reelection strategy. In last week's wake, the remaining rationale for a budget veto—a monthly Medicare premium hike $10 higher than "acceptable," for instance—is simply too puny to wear the clothing of grand philosophy.

Either way, a conservative victory.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Why Pro-Choice Failed

by David Frum

THE PLAN MUST HAVE SOUNDED CONVINCING when political consultant Roger Stone presented it to Senator Arlen Specter. A majority of the Republican party, possibly up to 70 percent, favors legal abortion. Under the sinister influence of the Christian Right, the leading candidates for the Republican nomination have declared themselves pro-life. So a glittering opportunity beckons for a candidate who can position himself as both pro-abortion and fiscally conservative. Senator, you're White House bound!

Arlen Specter's suspension of his presidential campaign Wednesday, just a month after an equally miserable showing by California governor Pete Wilson, leaves Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr. as the only candidate for the Republican nomination who has not promised to do his best to outlaw abortion. And Forbes is hardly a standard-bearer for abortion rights. In 1996, as it has in every year since 1980, the allegedly pro-choice Republican membership will nominate a pro-life candidate and adopt a pro-life platform.

For 16 years, non-conservatives have been gleefully anticipating an imminent Republican mutiny against the dominance of the pro-life minority. For 16 years, the prediction has been falsified. The top four Republican vote-getters of 1988—George Bush, Bob Dole, Pat Robertson, and Jack Kemp—all professed pro-life opinions, as did candidates Reagan and Bush in 1980.

Why do Republicans who want abortion to remain legal (I agree with them) tolerate this? How can the pro-life minority continue to control the party over their objections?

The truth of the matter is that pro-abortion Republicans don't object very strenuously. Republicans in favor of legal abortion think about abortion very differently than pro-choice Democrats. They tend not to see abortion as an inalienable right that women must possess in order to achieve their full personhood; they think instead that, on balance, legal abortion produces less human misery than outlawing abortion would.

That means, first of all, that unlike liberals who want to see a broad right of sexual privacy judicially inserted into the Constitution, pro-abortion Republicans feel little enthusiasm for the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision that created the abortion right. If a president appoints Supreme Court justices who think *Roe* wrong and want jurisdiction over abortion returned to the states, by and large pro-abortion Republicans won't complain.

In any case, because pro-abortion Republicans see abortion as a compromise, rather than an inalienable right, they tend not to get particularly excited about the exact boundaries delimiting abortion. Pro-choice liberals think of abortion as a right equivalent to prayer: Any limit on it threatens women's fundamental liberty. Pro-abortion conservatives think of abortion as a right equivalent to advertising: It can be regulated in all sorts of ways before any important liberties are threatened.

Right now, American abortion law must rank somewhere near China's as the most permissive on earth. Mothers may abort at any time, even as late as the eighth month of pregnancy. Teenage girls can obtain abortions without their parents' knowledge or consent; wives can abort without their husbands' knowledge or consent.

In other words, there's plenty of room for the scope of the abortion right to shrink before American law reaches what pro-abortion Republicans regard as the core of the matter: the legality of abortion in the first 10 weeks of pregnancy. Presidential candidates who hope that their support for unrestricted abortion will compensate for other personal and ideological deficiencies should keep that fact in mind. And so should the pundits and consultants who are tempted to take those candidacies seriously. ♦

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THE MARKETS DON'T LIE

by Irwin M. Stelzer

STANDARD & POOR'S CREDIT RATERS, who should know better, told us that if rich, asset-laden America delayed paying a bit of interest even for a brief time while it got its financial house in order, all hell would break loose in financial markets. Treasury Secretary Bob Rubin, who does know better, warned that America would default on its debt if those narrow-minded Republican revolutionaries didn't abandon their efforts to prevent his president from issuing a few trillion more IOUs. Fortunately, the markets knew a few things.

First, they knew that Rubin was being economical with the truth, to borrow a phrase from our British friends. "If there was any real danger of default, Rubin would have been issuing reassuring bulletins. So when he said we would, everyone on Wall Street knew we wouldn't," says Bear Stearns senior managing director Robert Pirie. That bears out what still another shrewd Wall Street hand told me: "Rubin is the most political secretary we've had in decades—perhaps ever. He's sacrificed some credibility in order to stay on the Clinton team." Or, as Rubin might have directed in his glory days at Goldman Sachs, "Sell credibility; buy power."

Kent Lemon

Robert Rubin

Second, everyone worth his or her salt in the financial community knew that S&P was confusing possible temporary illiquidity with insolvency, as James Higgins pointed out in last week's WEEKLY STANDARD. The government might be temporarily short of cash, but there never was any question of its ability to meet its obligations to creditors once the food-throwing tantrum in Washington was brought to an end by a disgusted public.

So the markets stayed calm. Nay, they rejoiced, with the stock market so enthused at the prospect of the government remaining at least partially closed that the Dow Jones almost broke the 5000 barrier. And the bond market refused to obey the administration, which was hoping that a panicked sell-off would so rattle Gingrich's crew that it would see the error of its budget-balancing ways and give the president back his blank checks and his no-limit credit cards.

James Carville, Clinton's populist public relations adviser and the proud author of that elegant political rallying cry, "the economy, stupid," once said that if there is anything to reincarnation, he wants to come back as the all-powerful bond market. The thought of the Ragin' Cajun converted into an entity as rational as the bond market is so delicious that one almost hopes Shirley MacLaine is right when she contends that we all have multiple lives in store for us. And the thought of an American president powerful enough to incinerate the world at the touch of a button, but powerless to sell his version of his country's financial condition to a bunch of bond traders, surely must warm the hearts of those who rejoice at any sign that government is irrelevant to our lives.

The markets' responses to Rubin's fib, S&P's financial naiveté, and Clinton's attempt to panic the Republicans into submission were simple and direct. Number 1: We don't believe you. There is no reason to default, and you wouldn't dare to do it. Number 2: If you are so crazed by a desire to score political points that you do fail to meet interest payments that are falling due, we don't care. The most important thing is to balance the budget in the long term. We markets know that getting a firm commitment from Bill Clinton is as difficult as nailing a custard pie to a wall. So, if it takes a temporary default in order to lock the president into his promise to balance the budget, so be it.

Number 3, and most important: We markets think the economy is in good shape, and getting better. As American Enterprise Institute economist John Makin points out in his latest appraisal of the state of the economy, "During the third quarter the U.S. economy grew at seven times the underlying inflation rate. . . . The United States economy in the mid-1990s is closer to the resilient pre-Great Society condition it enjoyed during the 1950s and early 1960s than it has been at any time during the thirty years since 1965. This positive transformation has not gone entirely unnoticed in the stock and bond markets." There's more: "The upside potential of the U.S. economy during the 1990s is considerably greater than it was in the 1960s."

Needless to say, this cheery view has its dissenters. Many economists see the recent weakness in retail sales and the slowdown in industrial production reported last month as the harbinger of a recession to come, and the soaring stock market as "institutionalized mania," to use the words of market-watcher Frank Veneroso. The gap between Makin's optimism and Veneroso's pessimism is so common in the eco-

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nomic forecasting business that wags are inclined to point out that economic forecasters were invented to make weather forecasters look good.

This tells us something about the dispute between Gingrich and Clinton over whose forecaster can beat whose. Clinton's seers say the economy will grow at an annual rate of 2.5 percent over the next seven years. Gingrich's reckon 2.3 percent. Both forecasting teams had the good sense not to carry their computations to several decimal places; if honest, both should concede that the other side has as much chance of being right as they do—and that is somewhere between zero and nil. It shouldn't take the economist equivalent of King Solomon to figure out a workable compromise.

Meanwhile, the markets watch. The president has agreed to balance the budget in seven years—unless, of course, he decides he doesn't really want to. Theodore Roosevelt once said that William McKinley had "a chocolate eclair backbone." Whether Bill Clinton is similarly afflicted we won't know until we learn whether he caves in to the big spenders who still dominate his party, or honors the budget-balancing pledge that the Republican Congress has wrested from him. If the president wavers, it will be up to the Republicans to hold the line. And to remember that the markets have shown that they don't take the administration's threats of default seriously, and are likely to respond to a credible plan to balance the budget by proving Makin right when he predicts that "as markets tire of watching the budget farce, we shall see strong rallies of U.S. bonds, stocks, and the dollar."

Irwin M. Stelzer is director of regulatory policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

THE HILL, BALKANIZED

by Matthew Rees

SHORTLY AFTER NEGOTIATORS in Dayton, Ohio, reached an agreement on Bosnia, President Clinton appeared in the Rose Garden to explain why 20,000 U.S. troops should be deployed to the former Yugoslavia. "Without us, the hard-won peace would be lost," he said. "The war would resume." This was just four days after the House voted to deny funds for a Bosnia peacekeeping mission unless it first receives congressional approval. So Clinton used exaggerated rhetoric, though he probably didn't need to. The Senate, led by Majority Leader Bob Dole, is likely to bail him out, acknowledging the president's right, so long as a number of conditions are met, to include American troops in the NATO peacekeeping operation.

Not that Senate Republicans are happy about dispatching troops to Bosnia to enforce the U.S.-brokered accord. In fact, there's widespread unease. But there's even greater unease about tying the hands of the president. Thus the hard-line attitude of House Republicans—stirred by two backbenchers, Dana Rohrabacher of California and Joel Hefley of Colorado—is not mirrored in the Senate. Dole's decision not to hold a vote on Bosnia before the week-long Thanksgiving recess was an indication of the Senate's different mood. Hefley had hand-delivered a letter to Dole's office, signed by 48 House members, urging the Senate to vote on the House legislation "as soon as possible." Dole ignored the letter.

Dole plans to introduce a resolution laying down the conditions (rules of engagement, an exit strategy, etc.) that must be met before the Senate will approve the troop deployment. But Clinton will have an easier time satisfying Dole's conditions than overcoming the House's flat opposition to the deployment. Dole's resolution was cobbled together by foreign policy experts Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and Jeane Kirkpatrick, and one of Dole's foreign policy aides, Mira Baratta. Baratta is a little-known figure in foreign policy circles, but she has been extremely influential in shaping Dole's views on Bosnia. She plays the same role in Dole's Balkan decision-making that the better-known Sheila Burke, Dole's chief of staff, plays in domestic policy.

That's not the chief problem conservative Republican senators have with the Dole resolution, however. They argue that it wrongly assumes the U.S. has real security interests in Bosnia. And they're also concerned that the conditions linked to deployment are fuzzy and unenforceable, making the entire effort an exercise in congressional posturing. Despite all this, conservative Republicans aren't ready to kill the resolution. When four of them (James Inhofe and Don Nickles of Oklahoma, John Kyl of Arizona, and Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas) held a November 17 press conference, they complained merely that they hadn't been convinced of the need for U.S. troops to go to Bosnia. In truth, these four, plus another 10 GOP senators, will *never* be convinced. But unlike House Republicans, they aren't seeking to reverse the president's deployment decision. Besides, there's a much larger group of Senate Republicans expected to support the president but who are waiting for the admin-

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istration to present its case for deployment persuasively.

They aren't alone; a majority of Americans are unconvinced. An ABC News/*Washington Post* poll in mid-November showed only 38 percent of Americans supporting Clinton's position on deployment. And while administration officials expended enormous energy forging the Dayton agreement, they couldn't keep the House from delivering a stinging rebuke. When Clinton learned the vote was going to be held in a few hours, he called House Speaker Newt Gingrich, asking for the vote to be delayed. Gingrich, then involved in fierce budget negotiations with the White House, was in no mood to help. He told Clinton this wasn't his fight, and he urged the president to talk to Congressman Hefley, a fifth-termer who spearheaded the anti-deployment drive. Clinton then called Hefley and asked him to pull the bill from the floor. Hefley didn't want to do this, but asked Clinton whether he would abide by the will of the Congress should it vote later. When Clinton said no, Hefley told the president he couldn't go along. The conversation ended, and the Hefley bill passed 243-171.

Hefley's passion for restricting the U.S. troop deployment was triggered by a briefing given in September by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Defense Secretary William Perry, and General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Hefley told me he was reminded of an October 1993 briefing of over 200 members of the House and Senate by Christopher and then-Defense Secretary Les Aspin. The briefing was held shortly after 18 American soldiers were killed on a single day in Mogadishu, but Christopher and Aspin left many members with the impression the administration didn't know what it was doing in Somalia. Hefley came away from the Bosnia briefing with a similar thought: "If the top guys can't do better than that, then we better get hustling" to restrict U.S. troop deployment. Two days before the House vote, Hefley and a few others were invited to breakfast at the Pentagon to further discuss the issue. When Hefley asked Perry and Shalikashvili how they intended to deal with the fact that American troops would be targets in Bosnia, they dismissed the question as irrelevant. Hefley left the meeting steamed.

Some House Republicans were also upset at the delay in getting a floor vote. Gingrich and the entire House Republican leadership were faulted for being insufficiently aggressive in pushing the measure to a vote. Rohrabacher, Hefley's partner in fighting the deployment and a former speechwriter in the Reagan White House, claimed GOP leaders were "cautious to a fault. They didn't want to make themselves vulnerable to the charge that they were undercutting the peace process." Rohrabacher accused them of stalling tactics. "There were so many delays that it was evident the leadership was deliberately delaying this." Other Republicans, such as Representative Mark Neumann of Wisconsin, wondered if the vote on the Hefley measure was a sham. He questioned whether Gingrich and his allies allowed the free-standing vote only because they knew it wouldn't fly in the Senate.

It won't, but there's still a small chance the Senate will try to block the deployment. The pivotal figure is Dole, who knows his presidential bid will not be helped if he allows Clinton to proceed. Sending Americans to Bosnia is wildly unpopular with rank-and-file Republicans as well as Dole's campaign staff. At the Nov. 18 straw vote in Orlando, every denunciation of the deployment by a presidential candidate drew thunderous applause. For his part, Dole told the Florida gathering that Clinton has "yet to make his case" on sending troops. "When he comes to Congress, if he hasn't made his case, he's not going to get the approval." Maybe not, but the real question is whether Dole might push for disapproval, even for cutting off funds for the Bosnia mission. That's not Dole's plan now. But the inevitable criticism of Dole's position by Senator Phil Gramm of Texas and other Republican presidential candidates could change that. ♦

Don't Believe the Hype

by Everett Carll Ladd

Here's a political conundrum: Why did President Clinton capitulate to congressional Republicans' main demands in the preliminary budget agreement reached November 19—when according to almost every press account he had been winning the public opinion battle hands down?

The answer may lie in part in the contrasting political character of the president and the current congressional leadership. Clinton has indeed found it hard to hold to any course. But another large part has nothing at all to do with political willpower: It's simply not true that the battle for the minds and hearts of the American people has been going the Democrats' way.

Well before last Sunday's White House decision to give in and end the stalemate that had shut down the

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government, the administration had been under growing pressure from a large bloc of congressional Democrats to do just that. The apparent conflict between these political judgments on the one hand and the success Clinton was supposed to be having with the public on the other, was never acknowledged. Had it been, some enterprising journalists might have seen reason to review all the relevant poll findings.

They would have found that Clinton has not, in fact, been gaining in public approval. Let's start with the familiar poll question: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president?" The president's approval ratings have been a model of consistency—dropping on rare occasions into the high thirties and rising a couple of times to the high fifties, but remaining stuck mostly in a narrow range from the mid-forties to the low fifties. That's where they were in the late summer and early fall, and where they are today.

In 31 national-level polls taken over the last few months, Clinton's average approval rating has been 48 percent—from a low of 43 to a high of 54. What's more, there hasn't been any significant trend over this span across the various polls. Gallup had the president at 48 percent approval in September and 53 percent on November 17-18. The ABC News/*Washington Post* poll had him at 52 percent approval in late September and 54 percent in the second week of November. The latest NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll taken November 19 put him at 49 percent, just about where he was in September (46 percent). The *Los Angeles Times* surveys recorded him at 51 percent in mid-September and 50 percent at the end of October. CBS News recorded a 47 percent approval rate in the fourth week of October and 48 percent on November 19. Stability, indeed.

By themselves these data hardly spell disaster for the president, but neither do they show him gaining. Other measures continue to reveal some exceptional weaknesses. For example, the late October NBC/*Journal* poll asked respondents how confident they were "that Bill Clinton has the right set of personal characteristics to be president of the United States." An astonishingly low 9 percent said "extremely confident," and just 19 percent more said they were "quite confident." Forty percent called themselves only somewhat confident, and 30 percent said they had no confidence at all. The 70 percent in the two low-to-no confidence positions equals his low point in nine previous polls. It's seven points *below* the average for all ten.

On the trial heats front, the president has for the past three months been shown besting Senator Dole, just as he was shown getting womped by Colin Powell before the general declined to run. This speaks to Dole's weaknesses—at this point in the campaign at least—and gives no hint of Clinton gaining strength overall.

Struggles like the one now going on between a president and Congress always invite big-time partisan spinning, of course, and endless media hype. There is one poll finding that, more than others, might lead an observer who's trying to cut through this froth to think the budget fight was going the president's way. Asked whom they considered more to blame for the shutdown, Clinton or the GOP Congress, large pluralities have picked the latter. They said so by a margin of 47-25 percent in the Nov. 17-18 Gallup survey—almost exactly what Gallup had found a week earlier and very close to what other organizations have recorded.

The first thing to be noted is that this question doesn't speak to intensity: How strongly do I feel that x or y is "to blame," and what does my judgment incline me to think or do? We get some help on this from the late October NBC/*Journal* survey that found—two weeks before the partial shutdown began—a strong plurality (43-32 percent) saying if an agreement didn't get reached in time down the road, Congress would be more to blame! Moreover, virtually every time over the last 20 years there's been such a confrontation between the two branches, the public has said Congress was at fault—even when the incumbent president was unpopular.

In June 1982, with the U.S. economy in recession, Ronald Reagan's approval score languishing in the low forties, and registered voters saying by a 15-point margin that they would vote Democratic if a congressional election were held "today," most respondents laid the current budget impasse at *Congress's* doorstep. Fifty-one percent told Gallup the legislature was "more to blame" for the failure to move the budget; only 23 percent blamed Reagan. Lots of impulses are in play here. Over the last quarter century "Congress" has become an epithet, while even relatively unpopular presidents are seen symbolizing the quest for national unity. In June 1982, the response didn't mean Reagan was up and gaining, nor does it mean Clinton is now. (The Democrats picked up 26 seats in the House in 1982.)

The broad philosophic-policy realignment that ushered in the "Reagan Revolution" and underlies the current one is pretty solid. There will continue to be ups and downs in political sentiment. The basic impulses in contemporary public thinking—for a kind of moral renewal, and for curbing government's growth—show no sign of weakening whatsoever.

Everett Carll Ladd is president of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

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WHY AMERICA MUST NOT GO INTO BOSNIA

By Charles Krauthammer

Now that we are marching into Bosnia, we will hear endless debate about the rights and wrongs and origins of the war. Everyone has a theory of what went wrong and why. The most plausible, in my view, is that the seminal mistake was the West's recognition of Croatia and Slovenia and then Bosnia—in effect, the de-recognition of the Yugoslav federation—without having first demanded, as a condition for recognition, ironclad provisions for respecting the rights of minorities and prior agreement with the other member republics of Yugoslavia on final frontiers.

It is, nonetheless, far too late for history. The issue looming before the nation today has the potential to create an entirely new history whose origins will not at all be obscure—the history of the peace "implementation force" (IFOR) that the administration wishes to dispatch to Bosnia to enforce the peace accords initialed last week in Dayton.

My view is quite straightforward: The deployment of 20,000 or so American ground troops to police a cease-fire in Bosnia would be a serious mistake for the United States.

This is a no-win situation for the U.S. Such a deployment can end in one of two ways. First, a humiliating retreat, as in Somalia, but with the stakes higher and the commitment larger, after some incident involving a major loss of American life and cries from the Congress and from the American people for withdrawal. Or, more likely, we will persevere, indeed escalate our involvement, send more troops to protect existing troops and be caught in a long-term, static, and defensive deployment with painful losses, ambiguous rules of engagement, escalating friction among NATO allies—most of whom do not want to remain there but would do so under American leadership—and no way out.

These practical, tactical reasons are obvious and have been well rehearsed in the current debate on a Bosnian peace force: no definable objective, no identifiable enemy, no exit strategy. But there is a larger strategic reason to be wary of a Bosnian involvement. And that is: To use heavily armed, combat-ready American ground troops as peacekeepers is to fundamentally misunderstand America's role as the world's sole remaining superpower, and to fundamentally miscast the finest, most powerful military in the world.

A sole superpower is the ultimate balancer of power in the world, or, to put it another way, the balancer of last resort. Its geopolitical role is to intervene militarily when a regional balance has been catastrophically overthrown and global stability threatened. Iraq's conquest of Kuwait and its looming threat to the rest of the Arabian peninsula was just such an event. It could be reversed only by American will and American action. And it was so reversed.

TO USE HEAVILY ARMED, COMBAT-READY AMERICAN GROUND TROOPS AS PEACEKEEPERS IS TO FUNDAMENTALLY MISUNDERSTAND AMERICA'S ROLE AS THE WORLD'S SOLE REMAINING SUPERPOWER.

That is the role of a superpower. It is decidedly *not* the role of a superpower to place itself between the combatants in a civil war of marginal importance to the world balance of power—indeed of marginal importance to the regional balance of power—among unreconciled parties who have already shown a propensity for killing and kidnapping peacekeepers, and who will have a much greater incentive to do exactly that when the peacekeepers are wearing the uniform of the most powerful and, one might add, the most mediagenic country in the world.

When America sends peacekeepers, it is not sending peacekeepers. It is sending targets. There is a reason why, for the last 50 years, Americans have generally not been used in peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping is the job of small countries with no particular

The article is adapted from the author's testimony before the House National Security Committee, November 15, 1995.

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interest in the outcome of a conflict; who are of no particular geopolitical importance to the combatants; whose very marginality is an affirmation of credible neutrality.

It is far, far harder for a superpower to remain neutral, and even harder still to be perceived as neutral, in most conflicts. And in the Bosnian war, in particular, the United States has been decidedly not neutral. We have made our sympathies with the Bosnian Muslim side abundantly clear in our declarations, in our use of air power, and indeed in our promises to arm the Bosnian government even as we act as peacekeepers—an absurd contradiction of the very idea of peacekeeping.

Doug Stevens

Imagine a president who came before Congress and said that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process required the presence of 20,000 American troops on the ground in the West Bank to separate the combatants and help them make peace. He would be summarily shown the door. And yet he is asking the Congress to approve a similar deployment in not a two-sided but a three-sided civil war that has been conducted with a much higher level of ferocity than any Israeli-Palestinian encounter of the last 25 years.

Well, you might say, don't we have American peacekeepers in the Sinai? Yes, but they are observers. They do not use heavy tanks. Their basic weapons are binoculars and cell phones. If all that was required of the U.S. in Bosnia was a token observer force as in Sinai, to lend the prestige and the moral support of the U.S. to some settlement agreed to by the warring parties, I could see no objection to that. It would be lightly armed, easily deployed, and easily withdrawn. Its function would not be to fight or to prevent others from fighting, but simply to give the imprimatur of the United States to a self-enforcing agreement among the parties themselves.

And that is the key point. If the combatants in Bosnia are serious about ending the fighting and accepting roughly the distribution of territory and roughly the balance of power now on the ground, then they should do it and enforce it themselves, perhaps with the help of a few blue helmets from truly neutral countries. If they are not, then there is no peace to keep. And between such antagonists is no place to interpose American troops.

What about the final argument, the case based on purely American national interests? Most advocates of Bosnia intervention have given up arguing that the United States has any significant inherent interest in Bosnia. They base their national interest argument, instead, on the collateral damage non-deployment would do to less disputable American interests: NATO cohesion, European stability, and American credibility. Take them in turn:

NATO. There is no doubt and no denying that non-deployment would be a blow to NATO. Indeed, the single most powerful argument *in favor* of deployment invokes NATO: To renege on this promise of American relief for our NATO allies already trapped in Bosnia would be the worst blow Clinton has yet dealt to NATO cohesion. Whatever the strategic folly of having our troops in Bosnia, the argument goes, our allies expect us now to take the lead on the ground—a reasonable and powerful expectation that is based on a presidential promise.

Yes, reneging on such a promise would be a blow. Nonetheless, following through and actually sending the troops would be worse. No good outcome of such a deployment is foreseeable. Either it results, as I indicated above, in humiliating retreat—in which case our allies are left high and dry and betrayed. Or it lingers painfully: We persist in a thankless, unwinnable, and costly operation, a source of constant recrimination and resentment among the allies that erodes and finally exhausts the alliance's 50-year store of solidarity. There is no good way out. Better, therefore, to inflict one blow to NATO now than an inevitable series of blows in agonizing succession later.

Yet one does not abandon a promise blithely. We should—and can—demonstrate concern for our allies and assuage whatever feelings of disappointment or

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betrayal might follow our decision not to deploy a peacekeeping force. How? By offering the immediate deployment of American ground troops in sizable number with the sole objective of evacuating any ally who wishes to withdraw now that we would not be going in.

This, at least, would be a mission with a beginning and an end, with a clear operational objective and a clear political objective as well. It would demonstrate to our allies—particularly our Gulf War allies, the British and the French—that our decision not to send 20,000 ground troops on peacekeeping duty is animated neither by timidity nor by any unconcern about them. Indeed, we would risk our own soldiers to extricate them. But not to join them in a quagmire.

EUROPE. The second national-interest argument is that we must intervene in Bosnia because of the continuing, indeed, intensifying threat the war poses to European stability. This one, a staple of the congressional testimony offered by administration officials pushing the peacekeeping force, is nonsense. The threat of the Bosnian war spreading to the rest of Europe has been raised monthly for the last four years. It proves more hollow by the day. With the Croatian reconquest of the Krajina in August and the recent Serb-Croat accord on Eastern Slavonia, the war is in fact *contracting.* There are warnings all the time about the war spreading to Macedonia or Kosovo or Albania or even Greece and Turkey. Where is the evidence for the spread of this war?

Yes, there was 1914. But this is not 1914: There is no Austria-Hungarian empire on the verge of collapse. There is no Ottoman empire waiting to be carved up. There is no drive for territorial expansion among the European powers. Imperialism is now 50 years dead. The idea of great European powers occupying other countries for the glory of God and country exists only in parody and old movies. There is no European interest in the Balkans other than staying out of the morass. The idea of the Great Powers going to war over the control of this cursed, tragic piece of land is simply absurd.

Which leaves us with the last question:

AMERICAN CREDIBILITY. Yes, whenever the United States makes a commitment and then reneges on it, its credibility is damaged. That is a cost of refusing to deploy, and it must not be denied. But the responsibility for that cost lies squarely with the administration that made that foolish promise without proper reflection, not with a Congress trying to avert the consequences of that ill-considered promise.

Moreover, one has to weigh what would happen to American credibility were we to deploy and then withdraw under pressure after a demonstration of impotence as in Mogadishu or Beirut. Ask yourself: Is American credibility greater after our entry and then withdrawal from Somalia than it would have been had we never gone into Somalia in the first place?

Credibility is not just the weakest reason for intervention. It is the most dangerous. It is weak because it is circular: We are going in because we have said we are going in. It is dangerous because it can only be vindicated by success, and thus is a spur to continuous escalation in pursuit of success.

By severing American involvement from any concrete national interest, the credibility argument creates a new interest of ever expanding demands. Yet Bosnia is a situation where even the most ardent advocates of intervention are so skeptical of success that they promise to leave in one year. That is a tacit way of saying "no escalation." But then what kind of credibility are we demonstrating when the greatest power on the globe injects itself massively into a small war pledging in advance to slink away on a railroad timetable regardless of the outcome?

PEACEKEEPING IS THE JOB OF SMALL COUNTRIES WITH NO PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE OUTCOME OF A CONFLICT.

What should the Congress do? It should reject the idea of sending a large, heavily armed American combat presence to be an active peacekeeping or implementation force in Bosnia. Yes, this will occasion great diplomatic difficulty. It may cause the current agreement, based on an expectation of American involvement, to unravel. That would be an unfortunate result, but it would have to be laid at the feet of the Bosnian parties themselves. They cannot expect the United States to impose a peace that they are unwilling to make on their own.

What will happen if Dayton unravels because we are unwilling to enforce it? What will happen is that, if the parties are interested in peace, they will have to reconvene in Dayton or elsewhere. We will have to go back to them and redo any agreement until it becomes one that can stand on its own, with perhaps a token NATO observer force or even some UN blue helmets to act as the local constabulary and police a separation zone.

We make the parties this offer: Make a real peace as in Sinai and we will support you. But nothing less. It is your choice. It is your country. But these are our soldiers. ♦

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How to Become Henry Kissinger

By David Brooks

In this country, any boy or girl can grow up, get on the speaking circuit, and deliver after-dinner speeches to conventions filled with shoe salesmen for $50,000 a pop. All it takes is hard work, dedication, and a reputation for global omniscience.

But how do you establish yourself as one of the intellectual giants of the age? In the old days, it was easy. All you had to do was write an eternal masterwork such as *The Wealth of Nations* or *Democracy in America*. But that sort of thing won't even get you a booking on the *Today* show. These days you have to have a multi-media marketing strategy.

And you have to start young. The world is full of people who want to be the next Henry Kissinger, and the competition is fierce. Perhaps you spent your 20th summer reading Proust, but they spent theirs sending express-mail packages: "Dear Mr. Koppel, That was a brilliant show on the collapse of American foreign policy. I made many of the same points in my latest polisci term paper (copy enclosed)."

The crucial decisions begin with college graduation. There's only one real career path for an aspiring intellectual giant: adviser. Get yourself attached to some think tank, council, or foundation. From there, if you want to be the Defining Genius of your epoch, these are the career guideposts you will have to follow:

Age 22: A year out of college you should be a research assistant at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. You will Nexis-search for a former Secretary of Commerce, who spends his 3-hour workdays arguing for a free-trade accord between the United States and the European Union. You will be in a paradoxical and uncertain state. You will fall in love with this famous boss and believe he can make your career. You'll imagine performing heroic feats in his view. But sitting around with the other young staffers, you'll be doing devastating impersonations of him, causing general hilarity. Making fun of your boss is so funny because it is the careerist's form of blasphemy.

Age 24: At this stage in your life you are fully qualified to be offering advice to presidents and senators. If you'd gone into law school, you'd still be sitting in lecture halls. If you'd gone into journalism you'd still be on the police beat. But the wonderful thing about the think-tank world is that it requires absolutely no qualifications. So there you sit as a research assistant in your rabbit warren at the Private Property Foundation, drafting contemptuous Issue Briefings—"Cowards in Congress: Senators Bow to Telecom Lobbyists, Threatening Real Reform."

Age 27: You should have changed jobs six times by now, up the greasy poll of the think-tank world. This will not be difficult, as the advice industry is expanding rapidly. And each new person who enters the business is another person who sponsors panel discussions and issues retreats, thus creating more engagements for all the other policy johnnies. Wonk supply creates wonk demand. That's Say's Law, 1990s style: The more people say, the more there is to be said.

After a brief gig as an assistant editor at *Foreign Policy* magazine, you will be offered the job of program coordinator for the Aspen Institute. This will elevate you to the status of Powerful Factotum.

A GAME PLAN FROM AGES 22 TO 68 THAT WILL MAKE YOU, THE READER, THE NEXT INTELLECTUAL GIANT TO STAND ASTRIDE THE NARROW WORLD LIKE A COLOSSUS

There are many jobs in the international advice industry that carry a lot of power, but senior people don't want to do them because they involve a lot of drudgery. The job of managing editor at a policy journal falls into this category. At Aspen, you will coordinate the Institute's seminar series. You get to influence who gets invited and which invitee gets to fly first class on the way to the meetings. You will coordinate the drafting of the final report. This is awesome power, and former European prime ministers will be kissing up to you on a regular basis.

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Your leisure time should be spent name-dropping. You should act as if the First Amendment was written so that you can mention your friendship with George Soros as frequently as possible. You will namedrop so much that you will find yourself dropping the names of other people's friends as if they were your own. You will plagiarize your friendships.

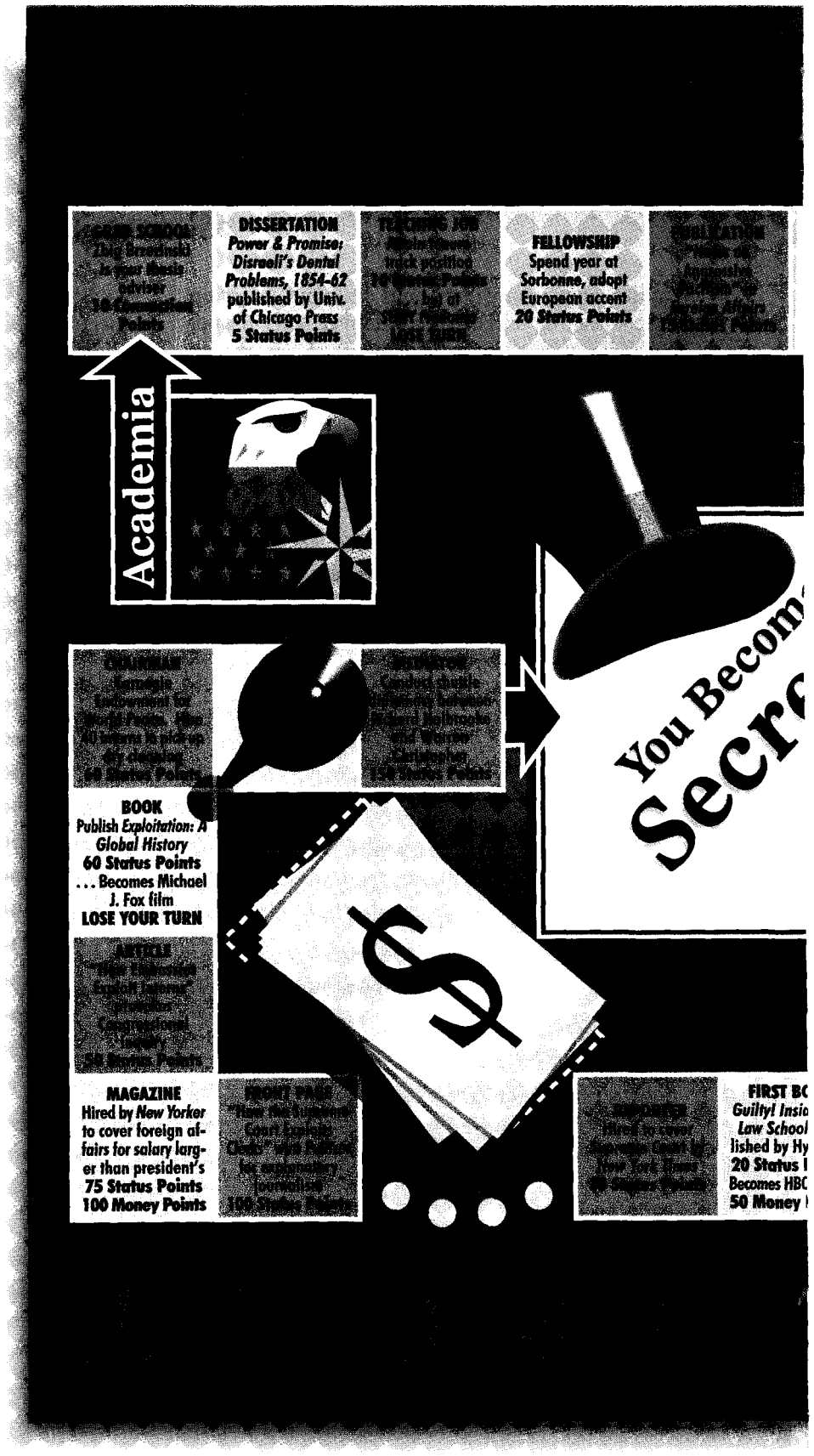
AGE 35: By now you will no longer be one of the people who sit in panel discussion audiences. You will sit on panels. To reach this spot you will have to make several crucial decisions. First, you will have to choose a field of expertise. What will you write about?

The answer is easy: yourself. The implied subject of all your pieces will be your own brilliance and good taste. But you can't celebrate yourself directly. It is considered good form to mask your ambition under the guise of intellectual purity. Therefore you must reflect your good qualities off some field of specialization, a market niche.

You could choose a country, maybe China, to be an expert on. But foreign policy experts have long fallow periods. China experts have plenty of TV bookings when there is a crisis, but there are years and years when attention is elsewhere.

The federal budget comes around every year, so a budget expert is always in some demand. But that is too boring; you'll be on PBS, but not CBS.

The poor are always with us, so there is some reward in being a welfare expert. But the social issues are at the low end of prestige scale. They are studied by people who wear beards and crumpled suits. Foreign policy issues have higher prestige, and at the summit are the foreign-policy issues that involve banks (during the Cold War, issues



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Doug Stevens

involving missiles were higher, but they have since fallen).

Stop by a conference on exchange rates at the Council on Foreign Relations and you are in the company of trim executives with trans-Atlantic accents, their skin aglow from a diet of subtle sauces and individually tailored exercise regimens. You decide to become an expert on capital flows to nations in transition. This will assure that you spend a good part of each year in $400-a-night Kempinski hotels in formerly communist lands. You will also have a grounding in currency matters, which nobody else understands. That will give you an aura (even if you don't really understand currency matters yourself).

And what is your philosophy? Are you a liberal, a conservative? The short answer is that it doesn't really matter, so long as you possess a manner that suggests easygoing messianism. Sure, you have a plan to save the world, but if people don't agree with you, you certainly aren't going to make a scene. It's the etiquette of opinion-holding that matters most.

Nonetheless, content does matter a little. If you are just graduating from college now, it is best to be vaguely associated with the Democrats. The other aspiring sages will go with the dominant Republicans, and that means that there will be more crowding on the right-wing side for the plum jobs in the years 2020-2040.

You are now in your prime op-ed writing years. You'll want to begin each piece by quoting Yogi Berra's line, "It's deja vu all over again." When you pitch a piece to an op-ed editor, let him know that the publisher of his newspaper is really keen that the piece be published (this doesn't have to be strictly true). Assure him that "this one will really move the debate."

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After it is published call him back and report that "the piece really caused a stir in the White House."

You'll also want to publish your first book. The subject isn't that important. Just remember that you are going to publish four books during your lifetime and you have to choose the right publishers. Your first wonkish book should be published by Basic Books. Your next worthy but dull book should go to W.W. Norton. The prestigious Bigthink book at the peak of your career should go to Knopf. And then at retirement your blockbuster memoir should go to HarperCollins.

YOUR FANTASY LIFE WILL BE BUILT AROUND EPISODES IN WHICH YOU MAKE DEVASTATING COMEBACKS ON "MEET THE PRESS."

There will also be some onerous duties at this stage in your life. You will have to attend conferences at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Munich and talk seriously with old men who are retired diplomats and miserable about it. Your only TV invitations will come from obscure cable channels whose penetration is to 35 homes in North Dakota. Nevertheless, you must appear because you need the practice. Meanwhile, your fantasy life will be built around episodes in which you make devastating comebacks on *Meet the Press*. You can picture the cameramen laughing at your wit. The producer will beam, and Tim Russert will practically burst into song. You never quite imagine the exact words you utter to cause this great reaction.

AGE 40: All the drudgery is paying off, for now you are one of the more senior staffers on the National Security Council in the Friedman administration. The president's name isn't Friedman, but you know that your real boss is Thomas L. Friedman, the foreign policy columnist at the *New York Times*.

Other people think that a think-tank job is preparation for a White House post, but you know that a White House post is in fact preparation for your next think-tank job. It is the press contacts made while in government that will serve you well when you return to the private-sector advice industry. As such, you spend 60 percent of your time talking to the media.

At first you make the mistake of leaking discrete news tidbits to the beat reporters. But you then refine your technique. You mostly leak to columnists. That way you get a useful story on the day of your leak, and then favorable mention ("one of the administration's brightest foreign policy seers") several months hence when the columnist repays the favor. Remember, it doesn't enhance your reputation to leak little things. Only leak those of your memos that undercut the entire intellectual premise of the administration in which you serve.

While in office, plant rumors that you are being mentioned as a possible president of the World Trade Organization. At the tail end of the administration you might want to arrange a transfer to Treasury. Your kid's scholarship at Princeton may fall through later in life, in which case you'll have to land a job as vice president at Goldman Sachs—one of those jobs where the bank pays you to appear at Davos conferences on panels entitled "Are the Bretton Woods Twins Obsolete?" and to deliver pithy one-liners to CNN's Lou Dobbs on his nightly show *Moneyline*. At Treasury you can make the contacts.

AGE 47: By now you've got a quasi-academic job (go to the School for Advanced International Studies, Brookings isn't sexy enough), a consulting business, and some offers to sit on the boards of medium-sized companies. You should be soundbiting like crazy.

But don't quotemonger about domestic or political issues. You're going for prestige. That means you must establish yourself as a teller of uncomfortable truths. By appearing gravely concerned you will lend yourself an impressive dignity. The key word at this time of your life is "unsustainable." Whatever it is you are talking about, warn your audience that the current situation is unsustainable and that terrible things will happen unless painful and courageous measures are taken.

You'll have NPR on your speed-dial and you'll call them every week or so just to let them know you are available. But it's also time to write a book title for Knopf (you'll also have to put 450 pages of text behind it, but that scarcely matters). Your goal is to produce one of those titles—*The End of Ideology* being the first of them, back in 1959—that are remembered for decades, even if the contents of the book are forgotten.

Obviously, your title will predict *The End of . . .* something. History, politics, inequality, racism—all these have been taken. Find something new. *The End of Gardening*, perhaps, or *The End of Time*, the thesis being that no matter when you leave for an appointment you are always late.

On your book tour, you must catch the eye of those who control corporate consulting contracts and industry-group speaking invitations. This means you have to have a management catch-phrase to show that you are on the cutting edge. There are two ways to pick your phrase. One is to adopt an oxymoron. You could

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identify yourself with the Social Market, Cooperative Individualism, or Sustainable Development. Or you could simply take the words Liberation, Innovation, Advantage, Competitive and combine them in a random pair: Competitive Innovation or Liberating Advantage. Either way, your catch phrase should be vague, uplifting, businesslike, and forward-looking. You should explain that it is the key to managing change in the global business environment.

Whatever you stand for, it will be safely in the mainstream. If you are too far left, the right-wingers will sink your future nominations. If you are too far right the left-wingers will sink them. The people with principles thereby commit mutual suicide, and the path is clear for a safe nominee like you.

If possible, insist in your public statements that you stand for "true conservatism," arguing that the conservatives of the day have betrayed their creed rightly understood. Also, since you are a Democrat, you must pay homage to the Market. Democrats get immense credit for this. It is a sign that they are sensible and serious (look it up under RUBIN, Robert).

At this point in your life, you may be offered a slot as a columnist for a newspaper or magazine. Ask yourself if you have what it takes to be a columnist. That is to say, do you have enough self-confidence so that after studying a magazine article on brain surgery for 20 minutes, you feel comfortable giving a lecture to a thousand brain surgeons on what's wrong with their profession?

Of course you have this self-confidence. Nonetheless, turn down the column offer. A regular column is nothing but slavery.

AGE 53: In order to make the difficult leap from Significant Player to Major Institution, you must at this stage in your life be always in the spotlight. That means you must convey an image that is more and more rarefied as you appear on media that are more and more populist.

It no longer helps to write for policy journals. In fact, your writing career is at an end. From now on everything that you "write" will actually be composed by somebody else.

By now you should be appearing constantly on television, in the company of Lee Hamilton or Sam Nunn if at all possible. Television is an attention medium rather than a persuasion medium, so your purpose is to merely remind people that you exist, and to exude a positive image.

To separate yourself from all the other blue suits on TV, you will have to develop an audio-visual signature. Kissinger has the voice, Tom Wolfe has the white suit. Even Warren Christopher has the funny shirt collars. Choosing your signature is a decision fraught with peril. Robert Novak already has the vest. Moussed-back hair is too reminiscent of Richard Darman. Choose carefully.

In order to get as many bookings as possible, you will have to transcend any past specialty you might have claimed. Now you will simply be an expert in history, like Michael Beschloss, or foreign affairs, like Zbigniew Brzezinski. You will specialize in knowing something about everything.

To convey the impression of this great learning, you will have to cite the *Federalist Papers*. But don't sound like a broken record. Work out a ratio for your highbrow references and rigorously stick to it: For every five times you refer to the *Federalist Papers*, make three references to Tocqueville, three to Clausewitz, one to Plato's Cave, two to Santayana and four to Sam Rayburn.

You'll be in the public speaking business at full bore at this point. Make sure your agent lines up no more than 50 speaking engagements a year. And never go anywhere for less than $8,000 a speech. If you lowball, the other big talkers will be mad.

Your goal at industry-group talks is to convey an air of insider knowledge while stating the blindingly obvious: "Al Greenspan was telling me the other day—you know Al, the Fed chairman, goes out with Andrea Mitchell—he was telling me the other day that there are three branches of government, executive, legislative, and judicial. And Newt confirmed it. You know Newt's a real early riser. Calls at all hours. Anyway, Newt agreed that there are these three branches and he assured me it was going to stay that way. He's not going to shut one of them. Doesn't think he could get it through." Give a knowing grin. Remember, you're on the *entre nous* circuit.

KISSINGER HAS THE VOICE, TOM WOLFE HAS THE WHITE SUIT. EVEN WARREN CHRISTOPHER HAS THE FUNNY SHIRT COLLARS.

AGE 64: At this age, unfortunately, you are going to have to take a few years off and serve as secretary of state. There will have to be a lot of plane travel, your speeches will be even more boring. And there will be the usual mandarin games. If some crisis comes along and you see a chance to win a Nobel, you can get something out of these years. Otherwise, it is just a necessary way-station to the climactic stage in your life.

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AGE 68: By now you are a Colossus. You know because now your friends are mostly glamorous ladies on the charity circuit. In your twenties, your friends were fellow wonks. As you became successful you hung around savvy lawyers. In middle age, it was corporate chieftains who hosted you at their hunting lodges. But now you have reached the top and can be assured a good table at the Metropolitan Museum's annual ball.

You sometimes visit your office at the Hoover Institution, but most of the time you're traveling with Felix Rohatyn on business for Lazard Frères. They bring you into meetings just as deal negotiations are underway, to dazzle the various parties.

By now you are so important you no longer need to be interesting. You drop your words down on people, as if you are always speaking from a tall lectern.

You are so rarefied that it does your image good to appear once a year on the Jay Leno show, and every couple of years you will play yourself on *Friends*.

You are no longer a mere individual; you are a Cultural Institution. That means you never travel alone, but you only appear alone when you go on *Nightline*. No shouting over others to be heard.

As the years go on, you will want to discover religion, so that all your pronouncements have a tone of prophecy. As you are riding on the cigarette boats of your friends, you might note that when you get right down to it, no creed makes any sense unless it is based on faith in God. You might collect your tossed off thoughts on the human condition in books with titles like *Our Epoch*.

After all the years of striving, flattering, maneuvering, and sweating, you have now reached that happiest state: smug complacency. No criticism can possibly dampen your high opinion of yourself. And some fine afternoon, during a slow news cycle so your obits won't be overshadowed by other events, you will pass from this earth. God, it transpires, has a staff of angels to advise Him on divine affairs. It's a long climb to the top to be the brains behind God, but this time, at least, you have an eternity. ♦

THE KISSINGER VISION: RUSSIA NO, CHINA YES

By Robert Kagan

Out of power for almost 20 years, Henry Kissinger still exercises considerable influence on American foreign policy, his opinions expressed privately in countless conversations with heads of state and foreign ministers and publicly in the monthly column he writes for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. Even Republicans who shunned Kissinger in the late 1970s today look to him for guidance in a time of radical change.

Few contemporary statesmen could be more aware of the need to adapt to such change; that was the basis of Kissinger's own foreign policy in the Nixon and Ford years. He helped reverse two decades of intense ideological hostility between the United States and China as a way of strengthening America's hand in Cold War bargaining with the Soviet Union. He also inaugurated an era of détente with a powerful and aggressive Kremlin leadership.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, Kissinger's famed strategic flexibility has turned into strategic rigidity. What was once only a tactical alliance with China has become, in his eyes, a seemingly unchangeable pillar of American policy. And as communist China has become a permanent friend, the weakened Russian Republic has become a permanent enemy—more so than the far more powerful Soviet Union.

This is puzzling. The Soviet empire in Eastern Europe has disappeared; the Soviet Union itself has broken into 15 newly independent republics; and Russia's European border has shifted hundreds of miles eastward, farther from the heart of Europe than it has been for centuries. These profound strategic transformations have been accompanied by an unprecedented political and ideological revolution within the former Soviet Union, where seven decades of communist dictatorship and centuries of Czarist dictatorship have been giving way to a struggling democracy.

Even as the power and influence wielded by Moscow have plummeted since 1989, those wielded by Beijing have increased. A burgeoning economy has

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brought China international influence and has paid for increases in military power. These in turn have fueled growing Chinese ambitions. Still not Russia's equal in overall military strength, China is clearly a nation on the rise just as Russia is a nation in retreat. While Russia suffers the travails of a transition to democracy, China moves from communist totalitarianism only to some other form of authoritarian dictatorship. With the Soviet collapse fresh in their minds, Chinese leaders have sought to avoid the liberal path of *perestroika* ever since the crackdown in Tiananmen Square. Their goal has been to make their country stronger, but, even more, to ensure that they will be the ones wielding its expanding power. As the Soviet empire has fallen and Russia become more democratic, and as China has grown stronger and more tyrannical, Henry Kissinger's approach to these two nations has been the reverse of what might be expected from a realist informed by Lord Palmerston's wisdom that a nation has no permanent allies or enemies, only permanent interests.

Kissinger has consistently and incongruously argued in essays and op-ed pieces over the past eight years that Americans must beware of Russia's "relentless expansionism." It is ironic that the man who had made détente the centerpiece of his foreign policy in the 1970s, who had decried as "myth" the idea of "an inexorable Soviet advance," and who had sought only "coexistence" with the Soviet Union at the height of its power, chose to inaugurate a harder line toward Moscow just as the Soviets, under Mikhail Gorbachev, began on their path of retreat and eventual surrender in the Cold War. Many conservatives, to be sure, shared a healthy skepticism of Gorbachev's intentions in the 1980s, but it was surprising to find the man who had once believed that Leonid Brezhnev was a leader with whom the United States could do business asserting that Ronald Reagan was being duped by the dangerous Gorbachev. Even as Gorbachev sued for peace, Kissinger sounded the alarm against what he warned could be a "projection of Soviet power" in a new drive for "hegemony" in both Europe and Asia. *Perestroika*, he predicted, might only mean "additional resources for expansionism and ideological challenges."

Kissinger, however, was still ready to make deals with the allegedly dangerous Soviet leader. At the beginning of 1989, when keen observers could already see that the Soviet grip on the Eastern European satellites was slipping, Kissinger recommended an arrangement which would have reduced Soviet problems and fears, a plan some critics derided as "Yalta II." In exchange for allowing liberalization in Warsaw Pact regimes, Kissinger proposed that the United States grant the Soviet Union "security guarantees (widely defined)" in Eastern Europe. Even the cautious Bush administration rejected Kissinger's advice. State Department officials rightly asked why America should buy what history was giving us for free. Within the year the Berlin Wall fell, and Moscow was forced to let its empire go without any compensations from America.

Undaunted, Kissinger had another idea for preserving European security in cooperation with a Moscow he still considered powerful. He proposed the creation of a "neutral belt" of countries across Central Europe consisting of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. On either side of this neutral zone, in the newly unified Germany and in the Soviet Union, Kissinger proposed strict limitations on armaments and troop levels. Meanwhile, he urged the United States to accept the Soviet Union's "national frontiers" and avoid any appearance of exploiting tensions between Moscow and the republics. Kissinger predicted his plan would secure peace in Europe by ensuring that "neither side could launch an attack . . . without months of preparation" and would provide "ample warning" to the potential victim of aggression. In retrospect, such a plan would also have relieved pressure on the Soviet Union at the moment of its greatest weakness.

The failed coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 brought down the Communist party and set off the chain of events that ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the 15 new independent states on its territory. The democratically elected Boris Yeltsin took charge of Russia and began the process of dismantling communist structures and instituting both political and economic reforms. By 1992, the power wielded by Moscow was a small fraction of what it had been just three years earlier.

The Russian economy, moreover, plummeted in 1991 and continued to fall thereafter. It was no longer possible to imagine that a Russian *perestroika* would soon fuel a new burst of expansionism in foreign policy. Any such rejuvenation lay at least two decades in the future. Russian leaders might try to cling to some vestiges of control in the territories of the former Soviet Union, through such devices as the Commonwealth of Independent States, but most observers agreed that the leaders of Russia's struggling democracy were far more likely to seek peaceful integration in a democratic West than had been Soviet communist leaders or Imperial Russian czars. Russian nationalism might remain a potent force, and a more democratic govern-

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ment in Russia did not guarantee a peaceful foreign policy, but the prospects for a restrained Russia were likelier than ever.

The new weakness of Russia and the restraint it imposed seemed to escape Kissinger's notice. He denied that a post-communist Russia would conduct a less aggressive foreign policy. Even before the Soviet Union's collapse he had argued that the end of communism could "increase . . . the threat of historic Russian expansionism." Kissinger took no comfort in the fall of the Berlin Wall. He speculated that some "high-level Soviet officials" might hope that "discarding a failed ideology" would allow them to carry out "the historic Russian policy of crushing any power center within Moscow's reach." While the leadership in Moscow passively watched its control over the "power centers" in Central Europe unravel, Kissinger looked for signs of aggressive intent. And as Russia retreated further and further east, putting up no struggle against the unprecedented contraction of its national power, Kissinger continued to warn of "relentless Russian expansionism."

Kissinger's idea that the end of communism might unleash a more virulent form of Russian expansionism was novel. Historians of Russian foreign policy never doubted that communist ideology, with its prophecy of global revolution, had intensified and broadened Moscow's aims in a way that far exceeded the earlier thrusts of "pan-Slavism" or the aspirations to build a "Third Rome." George Kennan had pointed out in the late 1940s that in the "guise of international Marxism" Soviet foreign policy had become "more dangerous and insidious than ever before." But Kissinger, who had declared Gorbachev's Soviet Union more dangerous to American interests than Brezhnev's, was prepared to declare Yeltsin's Russia more dangerous still. In September 1991 he insisted that "creating obstacles" to Russia's "relentless expansionism" was the key to world peace, and in the following year he warned that an insufficiently firm American policy could "rekindle the Russian Republic's historic tendencies toward domination."

By 1993 the key issue was whether NATO should be expanded to include nations in Eastern Europe. In 1990, Kissinger had been prepared to see Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary as part of a "neutral belt," which he had insisted would provide adequate security against aggression by either the Soviet Union or Germany. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, Kissinger declared such a system dangerously inadequate. The coup attempt against Gorbachev in 1991, he argued, had "revived the nightmare of resurgent Russian imperialism." Never mind that the coup had failed and led to the independence of Ukraine, the Baltic republics, and the 10 other states on what had been Soviet territory. Kissinger insisted that the "fate of the democracies of Eastern Europe" had to be "linked rapidly to that of the West" to protect them against Russian designs. What he had once considered a stabilizing "neutral belt" between the powerful Soviet Union and Western Europe Kissinger now portrayed as a "dangerous vacuum" which threatened to destroy "not only NATO cohesion but the very existence of NATO as a meaningful institution." And while Kissinger had many times over the years been prepared to make a deal with the Soviet Union on European security, he now warned that any such role for a much weaker Russia would grant it the "right to create a vacuum around its borders, preserving the option of historic Russian expansionism."

When the Russians objected to NATO's expansion, it seemed to Kissinger that their complaints indicated "a dogged insistence on Russia's own distinctive great power status." During the years of détente with Brezhnev's Soviet Union, Kissinger had always been acutely aware of the Soviet leadership's need for respect as a superpower, and he had granted that respect as part of his strategy for achieving coexistence. Two decades later he was far less concerned about the reduced needs of a much less threatening Russia.

Kissinger's suspicious view of Russia contrasts sharply with his approach to the world's last remaining communist giant. Twenty-five years ago, Kissinger's case for playing the "China card" was based on the need to find some way to influence the behavior of the Soviet Union. He rejected the argument of the State Department's "Sinophiles" that good relations with China were an end in themselves. No, he recalls, "I was on the side of the Realpolitikers." His "triangular diplomacy" aimed chiefly at unsettling Soviet leaders and inducing them to accept détente and greater cooperation with the United States, especially in Vietnam. The idea, Kissinger said, was to "align oneself with the weaker of two antagonistic partners, because this acted as a restraint on the stronger."

There is reason to question the success of triangular diplomacy and the benefits of détente in imposing "restraint" on the Soviets, since Soviet gains in the mid-to-late 1970s appeared to tilt the international balance against the United States, regardless of the China card. But during the Cold War there was at least some logic in Kissinger's strategy of aligning with the

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weaker against the stronger and exploiting the schism between the world's two communist giants.

When the revolution in the communist world turned this logic on its head after 1989, however, Kissinger changed his mind about the meaning of the U.S.-China relationship. He now moved into the camp of the Sinophiles himself and sought new reasons for Chinese-American friendship. He vigorously denied that good relations with China "lost their significance" when the Soviet empire collapsed, arguing instead that "the opposite is true." Close cooperation with Beijing was more necessary than ever.

To make his case, Kissinger depicts China as almost entirely defensive and pacific in its policies, while all the countries around China are at least assertive and potentially aggressive. Japanese foreign policy will inevitably take "a more national turn," threatening to renew the struggles with China on the Asian mainland that plagued this century and the last. (Kissinger points out, for instance, that the Chinese are sensitive about Taiwan because "the alienation of Taiwan was the first stage in the process by which Imperial Japan sought to dominate China.") India, too, is emerging as a "great power," and Kissinger foresees that its foreign policy will, therefore, become "increasingly assertive" and may produce "potential conflicts with China in Tibet and Burma." And, of course, there's Moscow. A Russia driven out of Europe, Kissinger fears, "may resume a historic activism in Asia" of the kind that led to war with Japan in Manchuria in 1904.

The one Asian nation whose growing power does not worry Kissinger is China. As he tells the tale, China has few ambitions but many fears and insecurities that must be understood and addressed. China looks to the United States for help in balancing its relationships with its "powerful neighbors—Japan, Russia, and India—at least until it is strong enough to do so on its own." China's growing power will not lead it to undertake a more "assertive" foreign policy, like, say, India, but only to a policy of "balancing" other aggressive nations. Kissinger even claims that the United States and China have "parallel interests" because both oppose "the domination of Asia by a single hegemonic power." The Realpolitiker who sees the danger of "relentless expansionism" in a prostrate Russia finds little threat to U.S. interests from a rejuvenated, authoritarian China. He apparently cannot imagine that a powerful China might itself aspire to "hegemony" in Asia.

And while Kissinger's answer to Russia's wounded pride has been a more rigid policy of containment, he

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demands that special care be taken with Chinese sensitivities. China, he explains, "tends to react with neuralgia to any perceived slight to its dignity." Kissinger has opposed efforts to impose sanctions against Beijing, "even on issues where I have agreed with the objectives," because "understanding" and "dialogue" are so "extraordinarily important" when dealing with the Chinese. America's "basically sound" nonproliferation policy, for instance, which has unsuccessfully aimed at halting Chinese weapons sales to Pakistan and Iran, has been "marred by insensitive implementation."

As for America's increasingly feeble requests that Chinese leaders relax their domestic repression since Tiananmen Square, Kissinger warns that such demands evoke "memories of a century of Western colonialism." Perhaps if addressed in the proper tone, he suggests, the Chinese "can understand, even if they don't agree, that we should have certain moral preferences which need to be taken into account." After all, "having the longest uninterrupted history in the world, the Chinese have been obliged to deal with many [foreign] idiosyncrasies." But it goes without saying that America's "idiosyncratic" distaste for totalitarianism holds a low place in Kissinger's priorities in the case of China, just as it did in the case of Brezhnev's Soviet Union.

But how convincing is Kissinger's strategic judgment about China? His greatest fear is not that China's growing power may make it more ambitious, but that worsening U.S.-Chinese relations, for which he holds Washington largely responsible, may lead some Americans to favor a policy of "containment" against China. In refuting the case for containment, Kissinger's soothing picture of a benign, defensive China changes and becomes more ominous. It seems that China is really too dangerous, after all, and American power too limited for a strategy of containment to succeed. Kissinger reminds his readers that China's "neuralgic" responses to "any perceived slight to its dignity" have often taken the form of armed attack—in the Korean war, for instance, or against Vietnam in the late 1970s. Were the United States to press ahead with warmer relations with Taiwan, to take one area of Chinese neuralgia, Kissinger declares that Beijing would "almost certainly prefer" to resist such a policy "by force than to be seen as acquiescing." He warns that it is most dangerous to believe that China's constant threats of armed action are mere bluff. "It is reckless," he says, "to play chicken with the fate of nations."

Americans are equally foolish to believe that U.S. power and international influence can be used effectively against Beijing. Any attempt to contain China would succeed only in isolating the United States. In another context, Kissinger portrays a China surrounded by powerful and assertive neighbors like Russia, India, and Japan. But it seems that an American containment policy would have "no Asian taker except perhaps Vietnam." In Kissinger's view, therefore, any notion of containing China is a "pipe dream" or, more accurately, a nightmare: Unaccountably, "America's ability to influence Japan would dramatically decline. Korea would turn into a tinderbox." "Collapsing confidence in American leadership" would produce "the erosion of restraints," and "nations with hegemonial aspirations [like Russia, or India, or Japan?] . . . would sense new opportunities." The list of catastrophic results arising from any attempt to contain China seems to be endless. If Americans cannot be persuaded to preserve close relations with China by any other arguments, Kissinger hopes they can be convinced by the simplest argument of all: fear.

Here is the thread that ties together Kissinger's seemingly inconsistent and often incomprehensible foreign policies during and after the Cold War—toward China, toward Brezhnev's Soviet Union, and toward Yeltsin's Russia. Perhaps Kissinger's strategic design, in the 1970s as in the 1990s, has simply been a matter of appeasing the stronger and finding fine-sounding arguments to conceal the fact. Perhaps this can explain why he sought détente and accommodation with a strong Soviet Union but raised dire warnings about a vastly weakened Russia, or why he played the China card only as a tool when China was the "weaker of two antagonists" but sought greater accommodation of China's interests when its wealth and power grew.

Whatever the explanation for Kissinger's misallied policies toward Russia and China, those who now increasingly look to this elder statesman for wisdom on America's foreign policy should examine his past advice closely. Republicans once excoriated Kissinger for leading the country into a policy of détente, which it took more than a decade, hundreds of billions of dollars, and Ronald Reagan to undo. Today, the danger is that in advocating an American strategy aimed only at aggressive containment of a badly weakened Russian Republic, Kissinger may leave us unready to cope with the emergence of a powerful and possibly more dangerous China. Clear-thinking defenders of American interests were right to reject Kissinger's policies in the 1970s. They would be wise to reject his recommendations again in the 1990s. ♦

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David Bonior's Democratic Soul

By Christopher Caldwell

House Democratic whip David Bonior of Michigan woke up the morning after last November's elections and learned that he would serve his tenth term in Congress as a member of the minority for the first time. But that's not what he remembers most about that day. "There was a poll done by Mark Melman," Bonior says. "One of the questions he asked was, 'Who do the Democrats represent?'" The poll gave a list of three or four economic classes, Bonior says, "and the category that had the highest level of support was 'the rich.' *Most people thought that Democrats represented the rich!* It was shocking—the most shocking poll number I've seen for the Democratic party."

Bonior has spent the last year driving the Democrats hard to the left, even as President Clinton has tacked back to the rightward-moving center of American politics. Always a hard-line liberal, who made his name opposing aid to the Nicaraguan Contras and vilifying the North American Free Trade Agreement, Bonior has used two maneuvers to revitalize his party: first, ideological and personal denunciations of Newt Gingrich; second, angry assertions that the economic policies of *both* parties are wreaking havoc on the poor.

Bonior is now the most loathed Democrat among Republicans, and his strategy has been divisive even among Democrats. Mississippi representative Mike Parker last week became the fourth congressional Democrat to cross over to the GOP, and all four have blamed Bonior at least in part for a take-no-prisoners leftism that froze them out. Joel Kotkin, a contributing editor to the *New Democrat* and no Gingrich fan, calls Bonior a representative of "maybe the most fringe political tendency that's ever been represented in the House leadership—on either side. Bonior is like the leader of some fifth party in a European parliament who winds up running the country by accident." Those Democrats who hope Bonior will bring back the old-time religion forget that the Democratic party has *never* been purely a party of the left. More than Bonior seems to realize, he is steering his party into uncharted waters.

Nonetheless, the strategy of using Gingrich as a foil for Democratic candidates appeared to work in this month's state elections; in Kentucky, moderate lieutenant governor Paul Patton narrowly defeated Republican opponent Larry Forgy for governor after casting the race as a referendum on "Gingrichism." And Bonior has managed to yoke the anti-Gingrich appeal so tightly to his own populist message that he may yet bring about a leftward shift in the Democratic party at the very moment one expected it least. There's a political explanation for Bonior's relentlessness. Far from being dispirited over the electoral success of the Contract with America last November, Bonior thinks it's going to be a bonanza for Democrats. For all his politeness, he has little patience with compromisers or reformists. Asked to name any New Democrat proposals he admires, Bonior sighs. "Oh, gosh . . . some of the things they're saying about personal responsibility. We haven't done enough of that."

The contrast with Minority Leader Richard Gephardt is striking. Sources close to Gephardt say he is aware he shut moderate Democrats out in the past and is trying to make amends. "Gephardt was, verbally at least, very conciliatory," says a recent party switcher. "He offered us anything we wanted. Bonior was glad to see us go." Is it fair to draw this distinction between Gephardt the conciliator and Bonior the firebrand?

"It's not *un*fair," Bonior says. "It's not my intention to alienate [moderate Democrats], but it *is* my intention to give the party the characterization it has always stood for: the party of working and middle-income people. That was our heritage. If we lost it—and we clearly did—we had to get back to it. The other option is to forget that heritage and to blend into the more conservative, vague, bland philosophy of some Democrats, which is very similar to the Republicans'. That's not where I want to see the party."

A Vietnam veteran who played quarterback on scholarship at the University of Iowa and studied in a seminary for a year, son of a onetime mayor of East Detroit, Bonior came to Washington in 1976 after four years in the Michigan legislature. He brought with him an enthusiasm for the Catholic left, including liberation theology, and a canny understanding of

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the union movement, which has dominated his district for more than half a century. Bonior saw union power in suburban Detroit shifting away from the United Auto Workers and toward public-employee unions. He built his campaign organization around the fledgling Michigan Education Association, a highly ideological teacher's union that vociferously opposed the Vietnam war. He failed to get the UAW endorsement in the primary but won it in the general and has since built one of the country's great political organizations. Bonior was Congress's fourth-leading recipient of PAC money in the last election cycle, helped by contributions from 281 different organizations. (He raised $1.1 million in all.) A variety of ideological and union PACs—the Committee to Preserve Social Security, the Electricians, the Coal Miners, the Sierra Club, the Seafarers, the Steelworkers—regularly give over $5,000 to his campaign, often maxing out at $10,000.

For all his pragmatic organization-building, Bonior's leftism is of the kind that used to be called idealistic. New Mexico Democrat Bill Richardson, speaking a few years back at a Princeton conference on the Nicaraguan civil war, admitted that most Democratic congressmen opposed to the Reagan policy in Central America had been interested primarily in scoring against the president. But then he paused. "That explains Tony Coelho," Richardson said. "That doesn't explain David Bonior." One Clinton administration economist says, "Gephardt likes this class warfare business because he thinks it's good politics. Bonior believes in it from the bottom of his heart."

Bonior has always been well liked by his colleagues. "I can't imagine he'd ever pull rank on anyone," says a longtime union lobbyist. "There isn't a snobbish bone in his body. At a time when most politicians want to talk, he can sit quietly and listen, and if he nods yes, you can take it to the bank, which is not the case with Gephardt. Basically, if your girlfriend broke up with you, he's the guy in Congress you'd want to discuss it over a beer with." Barney Frank has described Bonior as "the best combination of high intelligence and low ego."

These remarks are typical, but there's also a hard side to Bonior, and those who cross him encounter it. Bruce Cameron, a Washington lobbyist, was a longtime ally of Bonior's on Central America who found himself banned from the congressman's offices after he worked briefly to ease aid to the Contras. Michigan Republicans claim Bonior's local political organization will stop at nothing to win, and several of his recent campaigns have been rich in negative ads. In the 1992 campaign, "Wanted" posters appeared all over the district within hours of the revelation that Bonior's opponent had failed to pay taxes for some of his employees. One potential challenger mulled not running in 1996 solely because he had forgotten to vote in a few elections. A Michigan Republican explains, "Bill Frist got away with that in Tennessee; *no one* gets away with that against David Bonior."

It is this side that Bonior has turned against Newt Gingrich, and it's the reason some Republicans describe him as a "hater." Bonior's natural ability to play hardball politics has dovetailed with a fierce loyalty to produce the vendetta of his political life. In 1986, just before Gingrich began his campaign to drive Speaker Jim Wright from office with allegations of personal corruption, Wright promoted Bonior to the post of deputy majority whip at the height of the great congressional battle over the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Bonior was not just an enemy of Contra aid; he was a friend to the Sandinistas. While some Republicans, such as Oklahoma's Mickey Edwards, praised Bonior as a "true gentleman," others continue to describe his frequent contacts with Daniel Ortega and other Sandinista leaders as "close to treason." At such a time, Wright's promotion of Bonior was an extraordinary gesture of confidence in Bonior's abilities and loyalty. It was not misplaced: The ability was apparent in Bonior's coordination of Democratic opposition to Contra aid. Then-whip Tony Coelho admired it so much that he modeled his own office's task forces on Bonior's.

The loyalty shows in Bonior's zeal to give Gingrich a taste of his own medicine. The *Wall Street Journal*'s Phil Kuntz describes Bonior's office as "a clearinghouse for anti-Newt information," and there is no disagreement that Bonior is the general in the long march through Gingrich's political organization. Pat Schroeder of Colorado, Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, and Harry Johnston of Florida have charged that Gingrich accepted a gift by taking advantage of free air time when a college course he taught appeared on a cable network. Bonior himself charged that Gingrich publicized his course on the House floor by giving its toll-free number, and Bonior has joined with Ben Jones (who opposed Gingrich for his House seat in 1994) in suing to open the records of GOPAC, Gingrich's political action committee. Then there is Gingrich's $4.5 million contract with the Murdoch-owned publishing house HarperCollins. Some of these complaints are *de minimis*, such as repeating a phone number on the House floor. Conservatives have answers for many of the others: If accepting free air time is an

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ethics violation, Dick Armey has argued, then weekend talk show guests should be sanctioned. And regardless of the other merits of the book complaint, Gingrich's $4.5 million deal (the result of an auction in which the second-highest bid was $4.1 million) cannot be likened to Jim Wright's vanity press arrangement. Wright received 55 percent royalties for a book peddled primarily in bulk to lobbyists.

But the charges have severely hampered Gingrich and even limit his options as a potential presidential candidate. There will be plenty to discuss before the ethics committee for months or years to come—and not all Republicans are certain Gingrich will escape censure. Bonior says that voters are reacting against Gingrich because "there's an extremism there that they're not comfortable with." Gingrich's press secretary Tony Blankley describes Bonior as practicing a "particularly vile sort of leadership." Either way, the episode is proving to be a triumph for Bonior. If Gingrich's low ratings come because voters find him unsympathetic, then Bonior has his finger on the public mood; if those low ratings are the result of an attack campaign, then Bonior can claim the credit.

Kent Lemon

Democrats think Bonior's Gingrich-baiting is hunky-dory. Bonior's colleague and Michigan neighbor Sander Levin is right when he says, "There's a near-universal feeling among Democrats that Gingrich should be held to the same standards he established for Speaker Wright." The populist economics is a different matter. Bonior has called the 104th Congress "the most hardhearted, shortsighted, suck-up-to-the-rich-and-soak-the-middle-class Congress in history." That's fine for now, but in the aftermath of November's government shutdown, President Clinton is going to wind up signing a lot of those "suck-up" measures. On Medicare and Social Security, Bonior not only disagrees with Republican strategies for fixing them—he doesn't even think they're broke. On health care, he consistently favored the most socialist approaches under discussion. And on NAFTA, he was merciless in his criticism, attacking the president's "bad jobs bill" on *Meet the Press*. In an election year, Bonior could find himself clashing with a president who needs to peddle his economic successes. "It's the NAFTA debate all over again," he admits.

"What is the sense of being here and struggling and fighting for people and having them not understand that that's what we're doing?" Bonior asks. In backing every single redistributive initiative that makes its way through Congress, Bonior believes he's simply standing up for the working man, who, through no fault of his own, is getting less and less. To understand why Bonior thinks the welfare state has anything left to offer working Americans, it's necessary to look at his district.

Macomb County—almost all of it in Bonior's district except the liberal city of Warren, which is in Levin's—has been the most studied constituency in American politics for the last decade. During the Kennedy administration it was the most Democratic suburban county in the United States, but Republicans have won every presidential race there since 1972; even George Bush took Macomb twice. In 1994, Republican governor John Engler got 70 percent of the vote, and Republican senator Spencer Abraham took 56 percent.

In 1984, after Ronald Reagan destroyed union candidate Walter Mondale in this union district, taking 67 percent of the vote, Democrats invited Stanley Greenberg (now President Clinton's pollster) to find out why. When Greenberg read focus groups a statement by Robert Kennedy on the country's special obligations to blacks, the locals responded, "That's bullshit," and, "No wonder they killed him."

This reactionary streak is not as problematic for a liberal like Bonior as it might at first appear. One of the unsung reasons Macomb has been so intensely studied by liberal social scientists is that it provides a picture of a successful New Deal liberal/labor coalition undisturbed by roiling questions of race. Undisturbed

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because its residents have *fled* the very problems they bewail. Macomb has scarcely any black residents. Bonior supported busing in the 70s, but busing is finished. He still votes for the war-on-poverty programs his constituents deplore, but he never has to dedicate housing projects during election season or court black leaders. Similarly, Bonior supported gays in the military, but in a district without a big gay population, he hasn't had to make any of the public appearances at gay events that turn gay rights into a front-burner issue.

As a result, Bonior has found it easy over the years to play a double game as a New Deal local politician and a Great Society proponent on the national scene. He has also looked after his constituents' practical needs. He can be both the champion PAC recipient and a caring chatter-with-widows and attender-of-graduations.

"Most people in Bonior's district don't view him as a liberal," says Michigan secretary of state Candice Miller, a Republican and a former Macomb County treasurer. "Bonior doesn't hide his ideology. But he doesn't wear it on his sleeve either." Miller notes that all Macomb's countywide elected officials are still Democrats. She blames Republican candidates (including herself—she ran against Bonior in 1986) for their failure to bring out the contradictions between the incumbent's Washington and Macomb personas.

Bonior is certainly much more liberal than his constituents. Republican focus groups in the district show a high level of support for welfare reform and many of the other items in the Contract with America. But opposition to NAFTA is even higher: While attacking the pro-tariff Pat Buchanan might hurt Bonior, attacking Gingrich—whose futuristic vision is easily caricatured as one of relentless competition and robot-manned assembly lines—will not. An October poll taken in Macomb showed 17 percent of voters saying Bonior's attacks on Gingrich made it less likely they'd vote for him—and 18 percent saying more likely. The upshot: The archetypal Reagan Democrat stronghold should not be confused with a Republican district.

Michigan Republicans realize as much, and that's why they've been seeking a social conservative to run against Bonior. But a "Bounce Bonior" campaign recently announced with much fanfare has come apart. Big television buys pinning Bonior to the status quo on Medicare have backfired. Gary Maccagnone, a local self-made millionaire whom one Republican operative refers to as "McUnknown," was the early favorite to get the Republican nomination, but he quit in a huff over state-party efforts to micromanage his campaign, and what he saw as faithlessness on the part of his Republican recruiters. Even as they presented Maccagnone to the public, the Republicans were secretly trying to get Macomb County sheriff Bill Hackel, a conservative Democrat, to switch parties and run. On two separate trips to Washington, Hackel met with Republican strategists, including Gingrich and Michigan Republican senator Spencer Abraham.

The evening after a local paper reported the sheriff's movements, Bonior called Hackel from his Virginia home to ask what was going on. By some accounts, Bonior even enlisted President Clinton to call. Hackel's son Mark, a Democrat who was favored to win a seat on the city council in the city of Warren, found his name taken off the lists of precinct captains and ward activists, according to Republican sources; both Bonior and Sander Levin deny the story. Hackel senior, who describes Bonior as a friend ("We're both jocks"), has decided not to run; he'll seek re-election for sheriff next fall as a Democrat. Asked if Democratic outrage played any role in the younger Hackel's defeat, Bonior says, "I certainly hope not. I like Mark." Meanwhile, Maccagnone has not fired his campaign staff, breeding speculation that he'll split the anti-Bonior vote next November with an independent challenge.

Finding a candidate is only one problem for Republicans; the closer they look, the harder it seems to defeat Bonior on the issues. Ten years ago, it might have been possible to drive a wedge between the heavy-industry unions, traditionally social conservatives angry at seeing their paychecks eroded by taxes, and the growing public-employee unions, traditionally social liberals whose salaries rise only when taxes do. But the latter have always been Bonior's base, and with the election of John Sweeney to the leadership of the AFL-CIO, the public-employee tendency has won the day. "The Sweeney election is going to be a milestone," Bonior says, "with a tremendous effect on the whole politics of the country. There's an energy and a passion in these people that the country is going to discover shortly."

Even the long-standing tension between laborites and the environmentalists whose regulations threaten jobs is not such an issue for Macomb voters. "Those auto workers have boats," Bonior notes—65,000 of them, in fact, more than in any other district in the country. "That's the dream: Get yourself a nice home and car and boat. So it's not that difficult to convince

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them environmental regulations are good for them. The Clean Air Act is a lot more tricky."

Pro-choice candidates (national and local) have a hard time winning in Macomb, and Bonior's pro-life stance—which has long set him apart from the rest of the Democratic left—has shown some signs of weakening since his elevation to the Democratic leadership. Michigan Right to Life has withheld its endorsement for the last two elections, after supporting Bonior throughout his career. According to Barbara Listing, the organization's president, Bonior scored only 63 on an index of pro-life votes in 1995. (Three Michigan Democrats—Bart Stupak, James Barcia, and Dale Kildee—scored 100.) Bonior voted to permit fetal-tissue research. And while he voted for the House bill banning "partial birth" abortions, he says, "I will not vote for it when it comes back here [for final passage] if it doesn't take care of the life of the mother." So Bonior is not down-the-line pro-life, but he's probably pro-life enough for his district. "We're most effective," says Listing, "when we offer a clear-cut choice. When all you can point to is a mixed voting record, it's not much of an issue. It's going to take an awfully strong candidate to unseat Bonior."

Republicans have sought to use foreign policy against Bonior, notably in the aftermath of the Contra war, to no avail. It is the Middle East that has caused him trouble in his own party. Bonior's district has very few Jews and—surprisingly for metropolitan Detroit—a negligible number of Arabs. Yet Bonior has linked himself to Muslim causes in a way that has set him against Israel's interests. Probably as a result, a solid third of his individual contributions in the last election cycle came from Muslim Americans. In 1991 along with only 41 other congressmen, he supported the Bryant amendment to cut aid to Israel unless it could prove it had halted settlement on the West Bank. Just last month, he was one of only 37 members to vote against moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. None of this has hurt him among individual Jewish donors, and Bonior says that's because his focus has always been on human rights. "I have a very strong appreciation for what the Jewish people have gone through, particularly this century," he says. The stalwart support of such Jewish congressional allies as Levin, Connecticut's Sam Gejdenson, and now-agriculture secretary Dan Glickman of Kansas bears him out.

Shortly after Bonior's ascension to the whip post, a delegation from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) met with Gephardt, who personally reassured them that Bonior would "cool it." Former AIPAC executive director Morrie Amitay will not confirm or deny the meeting, but he does describe Bonior as having "one of the worst records on Israel in the whole Congress. If there were a credible candidate running against him, I'd have no hesitation in backing him." Now, of course, it's harder for Israel's supporters to hammer a candidate for supporting Palestinian self-rule when the Israeli government is doing the same.

Bonior's strategy of short-term sacrifices for long-term party coherence is fraught with risk. But he has taken risks before. And since those bolting the congressional Democrats thus far have been his outspoken foes, Bonior's power within the caucus rises as its membership atrophies. That has led some to speculate that Bonior is positioning himself for Gephardt's job. Sources close to Gephardt—quick to liken the relationship to that between whip Newt Gingrich and minority leader Robert Michel—say that strains between the two have been exaggerated. Bonior describes his relationship with Gephardt as "complementary." Meanwhile, few Democrats dispute privately that Bonior has eclipsed Gephardt as the standard-bearer of the party. Even Gingrich aide Tony Blankley grants that he's top dog. "Bonior has taken the public leadership of his party away from Gephardt," Blankley says. "Gephardt follows in his wake."

Whether he succeeds in resuscitating the Democratic party as a hard-line organization or allows it to evaporate through defections, Bonior has taken on an almost mystical role as opponent in the minds of Republicans, a role analogous to that of Jesse Helms for Democrats. Like Helms's detractors, Bonior's congratulate themselves every election cycle that voters have grown tired of atavistic politics and are now sensible enough to send their incumbent back to his district. And just like Helms, Bonior always winds up on the winning end of a "seriousness gap." It may come from a deep and intimate involvement with the cold war, for Bonior, like Helms, has the sense of the gravity of politics that one gets from opening one's office to foreigners bearing tales of 3 a.m. police raids and murdered relatives. He's not one to whine about how he doesn't like fund raising or how "uncivil" politics is becoming: When the stakes are this high, you do the work, you raise the money, and you win.

And Bonior does win. He is a master at getting voters to choose him over opponents whose ideas they tell pollsters they like better. That's just one more thing that sets him apart from those Democrats a top Clinton aide, speaking privately, calls "the pussies"—the Laodicean organization men who have made up most of the Democratic delegation since 1974. ♦

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Commentary Gets Religion

By A.J. Bacevich

American conservatism is a work in progress, a movement in a hurry. Yet the destination toward which it is hurtling is as yet largely undiscerned. What is the "good" toward which conservative efforts are directed? What ultimately is the new conservatism "about"? The omnium-gatherum of values currently passing for "conservative" is laced with inconsistencies and contradictions—contradictions most evident to the observer perched on the seam where tradition meets modernity, or where culture collides with grand prescriptions for economic growth and the transforming potential of new technologies.

Throughout the period in which they prepared their assault on liberalism, conservatives managed to ignore or gloss over those inconsistencies. Once the dismantling of liberalism has been fully secured, however, it will become impossible to ignore them further. Thus, the next great debate in American politics will take place within the conservative camp. The outcome will determine whether conservatives will be able to match the negative achievement of undoing liberalism with the constructive one of articulating a compelling vision for the renewal of American society.

For those interested in gaining an inkling of the terms of that debate, the November issue of *Commentary* is must reading. To celebrate the magazine's 50th anniversary, *Commentary*'s editors invited a select group of conservative intellectuals to take stock of "The National Prospect"—evaluating the present condition of America's basic institutions and venturing to assess the outlook for the nation's future. An intimidating 72 responses were published. Although by no means representative of rank-and-file conservative sentiment, the result provides a preview of ideas that in the months ahead will infiltrate into the political arena and, in popularized form, are likely to shape the next phase of the conservative agenda. In that sense, *Commentary*'s symposium provides a harbinger of what lies beyond conservatism's present-day intellectual horizon.

While it would be misleading to suggest that the symposium represents a unified view, a careful reading reveals three overarching themes. The first theme is an emerging redefinition of politics, with conservative attention reverting to concerns largely ignored since the 1960s: the politics of morality, values, and civic virtue. "Lack of virtue is dimming our national prospect," laments Harvey C. Mansfield, voicing a sentiment echoed by several other contributors. This perceived decline in values has already brought about a sharp reorientation in political subject matter.

Thus, according to William J. Bennett, "Cultural issues now have a central place in our national-political conversation." Even an important military strategist like Eliot Cohen assigns particular priority to the revitalization of community life and mediating institutions. "Never," he writes, "have concrete actions—playing a leading role in local community institutions such as churches, synagogues, and school boards, setting an example in our homes of the principles we proclaim in public—been more important." Striking a similar note, Richard Brookhiser of *National Review* argues that in pursuit of "cultural restoration," the conservative movement should "produce fewer policy wonks and pundits [and] more poets."

For those preoccupied with "cultural restoration," the conservative agenda as currently configured leaves much to be desired. The items comprising that agenda are not necessarily defective; it's just that they don't get to the heart of what ails the nation. That market economics will solve any remaining mysteries relating to the creation of wealth is assumed as a given. Yet despite some gratuitous boasting about the demise of socialism, few contributors are either cocky or self-congratulatory. Rather, the overall tone of the symposium is one of weary resignation, the result perhaps of discovering that in a great struggle, even decisive victory is incomplete and gives birth to its own problems.

Thus, when it comes to nurturing a commonweal of virtue, several contributors reflect an acute awareness that the triumph of the market is a mixed blessing. "We now celebrate the victory of capitalism," writes Nathan Glazer. Yet while Glazer acknowledges that capitalism "is certainly better than its alternatives," he devotes the bulk of his essay to enumerating the deficiencies in American society that the market cannot remedy and may even aggravate.

Similarly, Midge Decter worries that "even a whole raft of conserva-

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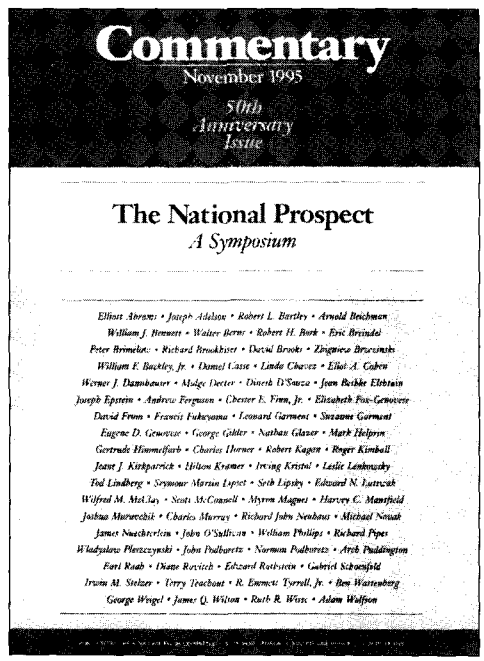
tive victories in the domestic cold war" will not save Americans from the "infectious nihilism" that she describes as "the single most serious threat that hangs over us." Even more pointedly, Scott McConnell, a columnist for the *New York Post,* observes that "the Republican resurgence fails to address key problems, and may well exacerbate them." McConnell complains that the new conservative majority "worries more about lower taxes and free-market principles than about social cohesion." Arguing that "the essential problem is not pragmatic but moral" and that "we are living with a crisis of values that amounts in the end to a crisis of faith," Roger Kimball of the *New Criterion* also questions the relevance of conventional politics. "What has the vaunted conservative resurgence done to address these problems?" he asks. "So far, at least, the answer is almost nothing."

For contributors to *Commentary*'s symposium, the remedy to this "crisis of values" is to be found in a new politics in which religion occupies center stage. Richard John Neuhaus, the editor of *First Things,* makes the case most explicitly. "Politics is, in largest part, a function of culture," he writes. "At the heart of culture is morality, and at the heart of morality is religion." The historian Eugene Genovese makes the identical point: "Begin where you will—with the question of immigration, of the family, of the racial crisis, of law and order—you will end with the question of the religious roots of our national culture and political institutions."

Thus, the third and, in many respects, dominant theme sounded by the symposium's contributors is the revitalization of religious belief in America. Various contributors suggest either that the times demand another Great Awakening, or that the nation is poised on the verge of such a mass religious revival, or that a Great Awakening is in fact already underway. "We are undergoing what the Founding Fathers would recognize as a Great Awakening," declares Robert Bartley of the *Wall Street Journal.* He is not alone in that assessment. According to Robert Bork, "we are witnessing a religious revival, another awakening." According to Hilton Kramer, "a serious religious revival is under way in this country." According to Charles Murray, "In the society at large, something resembling the great religious awakenings of the 18th and 19th centuries seems to be under way." Suzanne Garment sees evidence of "a type of religious revival;" Eliot Cohen a "revival in religious awareness;" George Weigel, "the beginnings of another Great Awakening;" Richard Brookhiser, a "religious revival . . . amounting to a Fourth Awakening."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November 1995
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The National Prospect
A Symposium

And a good thing, too. "Barring a massive religious revival," says Dinesh D'Souza, "it is hard . . . to foresee America recovering its civic moorings." Meanwhile, Tod Lindberg yearns for "a religious reawakening that will sweep away the detritus of a failed and decadent culture." For his part, Michael Novak predicts with evident relish that the coming "struggle to bring about the tens of millions of moral conversions that are going to be necessary if this country is to have a fourth Great Awakening" will "really sear our souls."

In short, religion permeates the *Commentary* symposium. This is a development of signal importance. That even 10 years ago a leading American intellectual journal would provide a forum for such sentiments was all but inconceivable. That at the close of this flamboyantly secular century an influential segment of the American intelligentsia—arguably the most vigorous faction of the present-day intellectual elite—should welcome, indeed demand, the return of religion to the public square is nothing short of remarkable.

The embrace of religion by conservative intellectuals shatters the image of American religiosity as the province of dim-witted rubes—an image relentlessly propagated by many in the mainstream media. It also suggests that in the days to come the culture wars are likely to get hotter, not cooler, with the so-called Religious Right increasingly well-armed to engage in high-level combat.

Finally, it means that the precarious unity that the conservative movement has thus far preserved will be sorely tested. For the impact of a genuine Great Awakening is unlikely to confine itself exclusively to the realm of culture. The return of God to politics will necessarily affect matters ranging from social justice to foreign policy, most likely in ways that few conservatives today can anticipate. ♦

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Movies

A Dated President

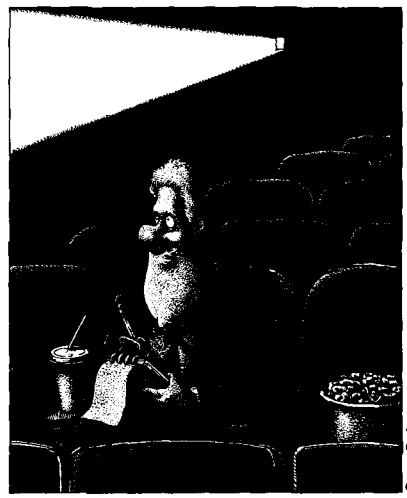
By John Podhoretz

A few years ago, Robert Redford's company announced it was developing a movie for him entitled *The President Elopes*—a romantic comedy about a widower president and the difficulties he would have if he tried to pursue a romantic relationship while occupying the White House. Redford is notorious for changing his mind about his projects, sometimes within days of beginning to film them, but *The President Elopes* seemed a sure bet for the highly political actor-director who loves to tell interviewers that he has long been urged to run for office himself.

The king of the latter-day Hollywood leftists, Redford brought *All the President's Men* to film, suffered a huge box-office catastrophe when his Castro-loving epic *Havana* came out just as communism was collapsing, and uses his Sundance Institute to fund so-called "independent American films" that share a vision of America as a nuke-loving hell of capitalist excess. So what better vehicle than a romantic comedy about the White House could Redford use to indulge his taste for ideological preachment?

It was not to be. When Redford announced last year that he was dropping out of *The President Elopes*—by this point retitled *The American President*—he said he was doing so for a most surprising reason. Rob Reiner, one of the half-dozen most successful directors in Hollywood, had taken on the project and had brought with him Aaron Sorkin, the author of Reiner's previous Washington movie, *A Few Good Men*. Reiner and Sorkin wanted to stress liberal politics, Redford's people said, whereas Redford was interested in the romance.

A liberal movie too political for Robert Redford? What's going on here? Well, you don't get to be a superstar—Redford was, I think, the first Hollywood performer to whom that noxious, if useful, term was applied in the late 1960s, and it still describes his status today—without taking care to protect your image. Maintaining a legend over



Sean Delonas

time is a little like maintaining a successful political career: The last thing you want to do is alienate a large segment of your audience by separating yourself from them. If you are too obvious about your politics, as Redford was with *Havana*, that part of the audience that does not share your views may not feel so kindly about you afterward.

Reiner's *The American President*, with a charming Michael Douglas in the role Redford would have played, is an enjoyable jape for the most part, a glossy piece of work with the usually wooden Annette Bening radiant as the environmental lobbyist who brings romance into the president's life for the first time since his wife's death. It plays so many clever and touching riffs on the question of how, exactly, a president might court a lady fair that the movie might have been a classic if only Reiner and Sorkin had followed the advice of the most liberal movie actor since the days of the Hollywood 10 and downgraded the politics.

In its last half-hour, Reiner and Sorkin decide that *The American President* isn't about Douglas and Bening; it's about Clinton and Dole, about the National Rifle Association and global warming. The snake in the garden of the president's romance is a Republican senator from Kansas named Bob (Richard Dreyfuss), who makes a regular practice of attacking Bening. The Republican attacks cause the president to lose 20 points off his popularity polls. This is absurd on its face; if we had a popular widower president with a teenage daughter who began to date while in the White House, the nation would go absolutely mad for it—it would be an American version of Charles and Diana before the troubles. Women would mimic his girlfriend's hairstyle. Soft stories about the glow in the White House would be published daily. His poll numbers would soar, not shrink.

Not here. Upset that the president is doing nothing to combat the attacks on him, characters based on George Stephanopoulos (a brilliant, career-saving performance by Michael J. Fox) and Mac McLarty (Martin Sheen) scream at the president about how he is failing to stand up for principle. He screams obscenities back at them.

The climax has to do with the votes on a crime bill of three Michigan congressmen we never see. Reiner and Sorkin are so deter-

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mined to prove they understand how Washington really works that they forget we are at the theater because we want to watch two people fall in love. We don't want to watch the lady inform the gentleman that she is leaving him because the nation needs a 20 percent reduction in fossil-fuel emissions. She knows what Reiner and Sorkin want her to know: The president is a trimmer, a liberal who won't stand up for what he believes because he is too busy trying to win the next election. He is, in other words, Bill Clinton, and Reiner and Sorkin are spending $50 million in Hollywood simoleons to give the current occupant of the White House a talking-to about how to be the chief executive of the United States.

Thus, they give *The American President* a climax inadvertently touching for its faith in a dying religion: a five-minute sermon, delivered by Michael Douglas before a rapt White House press corps at the morning press briefing. After a hard night alone, the president reveals he is a changed man. He defends the American Civil Liberties Union, supports flag burning, advocates a draconian environmental bill, and seeks legislation to ban all guns. George Stephanopoulos is delighted. Annette Bening comes back to the White House in her sweat pants and plants a big wet one on Michael Douglas right in the Oval Office.

And here's what we don't see, but can intimate from the final few seconds: The nation is saved from Bob Dole. The world is saved from global warming. Crime disappears from the streets when gun control passes. Early on in *The American President*, someone describes the title character as "the chief executive of Fantasyland."

Exactly. ♦

Books

Gitlin Out of There

By Jonathan Karl

Poor Todd Gitlin. The president of Students for a Democratic Society during the glory days of the New Left, he's a man with impeccable left-wing credentials—a true believer in the 1960s and a true believer today. But in April 1990, he found himself the object of attack from campus radicals at the University of California, Berkeley.

The occasion was a two-day student strike called to demand accelerated race-based hiring and admissions. On Day One of the strike, Professor Gitlin was scheduled to teach an introductory sociology course. The course was free of great books by dead white guys; it merely contrasted the 1960s with the 1980s. On this day, Gitlin was scheduled to screen *The Times of Harvey Milk*, a film about an assassinated gay San Francisco politician.

Despite the student strike, Gitlin held the class, but he scrapped the film and dedicated the session to a discussion of the issues raised by the strike. In this way, he could show sympathy for the strikers' concerns and still meet his obligations to the university. But appeasement simply didn't work.

Shortly after the discussion started, striking students barged into the lecture hall and started to howl in protest: How dare Gitlin hold a class during the student strike? Gitlin describes what happened next:

> I invited them to join the discussion. A black man yelled: "We're dying out here!" This line has echoed in my mind often since. I asked him, "How is admitting more black students and hiring more black faculty going to stop the dying out there?" There was no response.

No response, just more shouting at the middle-aged white male professor who dared conduct class during a student strike. It didn't matter that this professor was a left-wing activist of long standing who, by and large, agreed with the students' concerns. They saw him as a white male oppressor. White and male, just like David Duke.

The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked by Culture Wars (Metropolitan Books, 279 pages, $25) is a blistering attack on the same phenomenon conservative critics like William Bennett, Irving Kristol, and Dinesh D'Souza have lambasted for years: the wackiness of the multiculturalist left seen most vividly at elite colleges and universities.

It may seem a little late for yet another book decrying the ways of campus radicals, but Gitlin brings a unique and long-overdue perspective. He is the quintessential tenured radical, but he finds himself agreeing with much of the argument of those he despises most: conservatives. "Some things are true even if Dinesh D'Souza says them," Gitlin writes.

He is not writing to agree with D'Souza, whose 1991 *Illiberal Education* chronicled the outrages of campus multiculturalism and helped fuel the backlash against "political correctness." In fact, he feverishly attacks D'Souza and oth-

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er conservatives, whom he calls "propagandists" worshipping "at the shrine of history but . . . innocent of the facts." Gitlin's plea is to those whom D'Souza attacks, the befuddled left that has brought separatism, speech codes, and trivial studies to America's best universities. To them he breaks (belatedly) the bad news: The left is dead. The only hope is to give up radical multiculturalism in favor of a universalist politics.

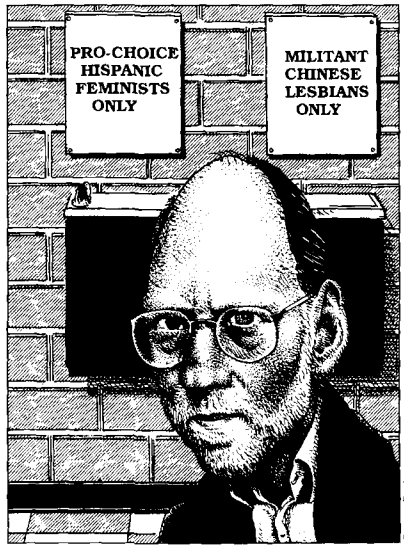
Surveying the cultural scene, Gitlin sees conservatives arguing for universal values while the left balkanizes itself into a series of special interests clamoring for victim status. This puzzles Gitlin: "The oddity is that the Left, which once stood for universal values, seems to speak today for selected identities, while the Right, long associated with privileged interests, claims to defend the common good."

This, Gitlin insists, spells disaster for the left, which should be for that grand universal truth: equality. Instead, the left has crumbled into ever smaller and isolated subcultures each in "rivalry for the crown of thorns." Meanwhile, in Gitlin's view, America has gone to seed, with corporate barons growing richer and richer and the unfortunate descending further and further into poverty (Gitlin takes the economic argument for granted, only occasionally offering data to make his point).

Surveying the cultural wasteland of "identity politics," Gitlin is distraught. He sees the multiculturalists attacking white male leftists, "lesbians of color" attacking white lesbians, and students unable to piece together a rational argument. This is not a feel-good book: "The squandering of energy on identity politics, the hardening of the boundaries between groups, the insistence that individuals are no more than their labels, is an American tragedy." Hence: "While the Right was occupying the heights of the political system, the assemblage of groups identified with the Left were marching on the English department."

Newsweek asks, "Why would white men feel they are being pushed to the wall when they hold most of the jobs?" and Gitlin is outraged: "They hold most of the jobs. The checkout clerk, the investment banker, Slobodan Milosevic, and the Caucasian holding a VIETNAM VET WILL WORK FOR FOOD sign were grouped together."

Still, Gitlin is unwilling to go too far in his attack on "identity politics." He names very few names and repeatedly reminds us of the important victories won by the multiculturalists. After all, these are his fellow travelers: In 1991, he was one of the first to join Teachers for a Democratic Culture, a group that extolled the virtues of recent "reforms" of university curricula and condemned the conservative critics "and like-minded writers in the press who are endangering education with a campaign of harassment and misrepresentation." Among those who joined with Gitlin were such politically correct heavies as Stanley Fish, Houston Baker, and Jonathan Culler.



Sean Delonas

Instead, in his struggle to find out what went wrong, Gitlin finds a number of contributing causes: the attack on the Enlightenment's faith in reason by thinkers like Nietzsche, Weber, and Derrida; real, raging racial inequality and injustice in America; the "all-consuming blankness of Generation X." But, like the conservatives he hates, Gitlin finds the root of much of the problem in the political vanguard of the 1960s, especially the late 1960s, when the "movement" became both anti-American and consumed by "separatist rage."

In the end, Gitlin pleads for a new "universalist Left" that will fight the good fight for equality and the common good, but he is not optimistic. The ethnic nationalists have stronger emotional appeal: "They wave flags; they recruit armies; they build monuments; people are willing to kill and die for their symbols. By contrast, commonality offers—what? The discredited red flag? The blue banner of UN bureaucracy?"

So, what is a white male leftist like Todd Gitlin to do? He insists that the left's "main business" is undone: the mobilization for equality in the face of "an unbridled market" that "generates mass panic and beckons gangsterism, theocracy, and authoritarian crackdowns." But, as he acknowledges, when he issues the clarion call to action, nobody follows.

Gitlin can diagnose the left's ills, but he's at a loss to find a cure. At least he offers a start—an appeal to common sense and an end to the politics of identity: "For too long, too many Americans have busied themselves digging trenches to fortify their cultural borders, lining their trenches with insulation. Enough bunkers! Enough of the perfection of differences! We ought to be building bridges."

But bridges to what? On this fundamental question, Gitlin has no answer. ♦

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Sports

Baseball Blows It Again

By Christopher Caldwell

In the season just concluded, Albert Belle was the most dangerous hitter on the most dangerous hitting ballclub in decades, the Cleveland Indians. He led the American League with 50 home runs last year, and tied for the league lead with 126 runs batted in. He's the only person in a century and a quarter of major league history to hit 50 homers and 50 doubles in a season—and he did it in just 144 games. Belle hit 32 home runs after August 2; Babe Ruth didn't even do that when he hit 60 homers, nor did Roger Maris when he hit 61.

Yet when the Baseball Writers of America announced the American League Most Valuable Player award on November 16, Belle was passed over in favor of Mo Vaughn of the Boston Red Sox, who knocked in as many runs as Belle but hit 11 fewer homers and batted 17 points lower.

I'm a Red Sox fan, and over the last four years Mo Vaughn has been personally responsible for dozens of my happiest summer days. His community service in Boston has helped black and white Bostonians to look on the neighborhoods of Roxbury and Dorchester with a great deal less fear and a great deal more understanding. He's one of the handful of people I'd most like to meet. But he didn't deserve the MVP. Albert Belle did, and the fact that he didn't get it is a scandal.

There's the ostensible reason for giving Vaughn the award—he was more important to the Red Sox than Belle was to the Indians. That's stupid, and doesn't bear going into. Then there's the real reason Belle lost: There's a character clause in the award language, and Belle supposedly has a bad character.

The exhibits: When Belle was warming up in the outfield shortly after being released from alcohol detox in 1991, he was taunted by a fan in the centerfield stands. He wheeled around and fired a fastball into the fan's chest, knocking him down. In 1994, Belle was suspended for using a corked bat, against baseball rules.

Even in this year's post-season, Belle's temper was on display. When the Red Sox called for an examination of Belle's bat (for corking) after a clutch 11th inning home run, Belle climbed onto the top step of the dugout, flexed his muscle and swore menacingly across the diamond. Days later he was cursing out a reporter who had come to do a puff piece on him. Mo Vaughn, by contrast, spends nearly all his free hours with poor children in Boston's worst neighborhoods.

But the MVP "character" issue is wholly bogus where Belle is concerned. Is Roger Clemens (who took the MVP in 1986) a better fellow than Belle? I recall Roger lip-readably taunting umpire Terry Cooney with a profanity unutterable on national television during the 1988 championship series, all because Cooney had missed a strike call. And then lying about it after he'd been thrown out of the game.

How about the two doozies who won it in 1968? There was Bob Gibson, a meaner man than Belle; and Denny McLain, who would shortly become better known for his gambling exploits and mafia connections. Or Pete Rose, who won in 1973. Or Orlando Cepeda (1967), he of the 160-pound marijuana bust in Puerto Rico in 1975. I recall Cesar Cedeño winning a rackful of Gold Gloves in the 1970s after disposing of his girlfriend by gunshot in the Dominican Republic. Moving to football, the NFL has given us such MVPs as O.J. Simpson, who . . .

Even if it weren't a silly stipulation, Belle deserves the award on character grounds alone, because he happens to be a man of genuine character. Let's take his boozing first. As an arrogant, talented fellow in his early twenties, Belle submitted to the designed-to-be-humiliating ordeal of detox with a manliness and patience beyond his years. This is hard work that many, many ballplayers before Belle didn't have the stomach for, and the thing it's a triumph of is *character*.

There are two ways to handle enormous God-given talent: First, ride it as far as it goes, which isn't far—the sad example of the Red Sox's never-quite-great Fred Lynn comes to mind. Second, train like a player of lesser gifts, however grueling that may be (the Ted Williams/Nolan Ryan method). Belle is of the latter school. Teammates say he watches opposing pitchers like a hawk, keeps dossiers on them in meticulously ordered spiral notebooks, and punishes himself with hours of batting practice when he's in a slump. Whatever the outward arrogance, this is a sign of inner modesty, self-knowledge, and a capacity for hard work that have traditionally fallen under the rubric of *character*.

Few dispute that Albert Belle lacks an appealing personality. But personality and character are not the same thing. In confusing the two, the baseball writers have turned the most important award in professional sports into a personality contest. Albert Belle wuz robbed. ♦

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PENTHOUSE
THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR MEN

Parody

DEAR PENTHOUSE FORUM

I am a mid-level staffer at the Congressional Budget Office, so I never thought anything would happen to me that I could share with your Forum column. But last month the White House and the Congress reached an agreement by which the CBO would have to consult the OMB in devising its budget scoring projections.

I was wandering around the Old Executive Office Building when I heard giggling coming from one of the anterooms. The door was ajar and when I peeked in I saw two female budget analysts sprawled amidst computer printout forms, their access badges rising and falling rapidly against their white blouses.

"GRH II did amend the impoundment control provisions of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act," the taller one, who I will call Cheri, panted. I let out a moan as the other one, who I'll call Desiree, bared her fiscal premises.

"But this is unsatisfactory," Desiree whispered huskily, "because the BEA does not provide a specific definition of outyear supplementals."

By now I was in a frenzy. "The distributional inequalities obviate the need for back-loaded debt limit extensions!" I blurted, unable to control myself.

The women were stunned for a moment, and stared at me. But Cheri held out her hand, inviting me to partake of her sequestration strategies. I soon could feel Desiree's entitlement caps snuggling against my baseline. I love fiscal discipline. Soon Cheri was reconfiguring her CPI calculations, to loosen the pressure on her end, but that only encouraged me to tighten my authorizations.

"I never thought I'd see you in a dynamic scoring posture," I laughed, pressing my advantage.

"I was only seeking a complete reconciliation package," Cheri responded, with an impish grin. But by now her obligational authorities had passed the point of no return. I was in total control.

"You're cutting! You're cutting!" she protested with a pained expression on her face.

"No, I'm only reducing the rate of increase," I answered. Desiree suggested that we take everything off the table for the sake of unconstrained entitlements growth. But I guess I'm a little too old-fashioned for that.

As we approached a CR compromise I could hear their voices rising and my nerves were jangling. It seemed to go on forever and ever, but eventually outlays came back into balance with appropriations, and we lay in a heap musing contentedly on the BBA framework and default prevention scenarios.

Minutes passed and finally Cheri stood up and looked dreamily at her blue book. And then looked at me with newfound respect. "Our original proposal wasn't nearly so front-loaded. Thank you."

The economists over at OMB give good brain, I thought to myself later. I never thought a train wreck would be so great.—*D. B., Washington*

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